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HENRY DE  
POMEROY

MRS BRAY.





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**HENRY DE POMEROY**

**OR**

*The Eve of St. John*







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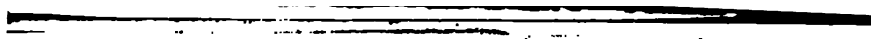
*Frontispiece.*

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# HENRY DE POMEROY

OR

The Eve of St. John

BY

MRS. BRAY

*NEW AND REVISED EDITION*

LONDON

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1884

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CRYSTAL PALACE PRESS.

# HENRY DE POMEROY.

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## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

Though sluggards deem it but a foolish chase,  
And marvel men should quit their easy chair,  
The toilsome way, and long, long league to trace,  
O there is sweetness in the mountain air,  
And life that bloated ease can never hope to share.  
BYRON'S *Childe Harold*.

I HAD long entertained the wish to visit that part of Devon known by the name of the South Hams ; but not so designated, I presume, as an ingenious historian once conjectured, in honour of Ammon, who, he states, was worshipped by the Druid priesthood on the southern coast of that county ; for as the word Ham was anciently applied to a low pasture ground, situated near a river or the sea, this circumstance alone seems to point out the source whence the Hams derived their name, as the cattle ground of Devon.

But I will no longer detain my reader respecting the disputed etymology of one of the most lovely portions of our county ; suffice it to say, that my wish to visit these far-famed valleys was, at length, indulged ; and in the summer of 1838, we commenced that memorable expedition, replete with consequences of import to ourselves, and, I trust, to you, my gentle reader, in your progress through the work. And I would strongly advise you to bear in mind the maxim of a very great author, who was also

a very good man, as it will be profitable to us both ; namely, "Not to fall into the bad habit of reading too critically," by which he means ill-humouredly, caustically, sourly ; but rather to recollect that an author's book is, generally speaking, like the author himself, a compound, not all good, nor yet all bad :—

Our virtues would be proud, if our vices whipt them not ;  
And our vices would despair, if they were not cherished by our virtues.

Remember, reader, how much of time and thought goes to the composition of a book (if it be at all worth the perusal), through which you glide onward in a few hours with so much ease. Think of the days, weeks, and months of study, that an author, at least in many instances, must undergo, merely to prepare his own mind for a subject that is to instruct or delight thine. Think of his health, his temper, his feelings, his anxiety, the trials he must endure, the wear and tear of these things, in the progress of writing, printing, and publishing. And then think how liable he is to be mistaken by others, or to be misrepresented by those who are his enemies, to be censured by the ill-natured, and hated by the envious, who are not the least bitter of his foes. Think, too, of his labour ; that the spirit of his subject, like other Spirits, will sometimes be elusive as well as delusive ; and that, like the Devil and Owen Glendower, he will not always "come when you do call for him."

Take, therefore, whatever thou canst find good in an author, and lay it to thy heart, and esteem him and thyself the better for having good thoughts and feelings in common. And what thou likest not, or what liketh not thee, give it, at least, so much of thy charity as to think, hadst thou been in the writer's place, thou mightest not have done better, and such thoughts as these shall never harm thee. And when, also, the author's labour is considered, recollect the exclamation of good old Bishop Hall, who lived in the times of King James the First, when he thus comments on one of the vanities of this world in the pains of composition :—"What scratching of heads do we find in the closets of our scholars." Think, therefore, gentle reader, of the

difficulties of authorship with some commiseration, and make a large allowance for faults, wherever you find something of nature, for that is the salt of a book whatever be its subject. And in thy most critical mood, my reader, ever bear in mind that the priest and the barber, in the expurgation of Don Quixote's library, would not suffer the housekeeper and niece to send flying out of the window, to the pile of condemned books, "Tirante the White," simply because there was in it so much of nature that the knights ate, drank, slept, made their wills, and died in their beds like other people, "with several other things," said the priest, "not to be found in other books of the kind, and therefore do we spare him." To sum up all, let me recommend to you, my gentle reader, to select, not only from these pages, but from whatever you may read, the passages or morsels most healthful in themselves and most suited to your taste, and leave the rest to those who are indifferent about the matter.

But no longer to digress, I shall commence at once with noticing that part of our journey which gave rise to the following work, our visit to the very ancient and very interesting ruins of the Castle of Berry Pomeroy, near Totnes, in Devonshire.

My companion had visited it many years before, but now scarcely recognised it again, so much was it altered by the course of time. To me it was all new ground; and my impressions, therefore, were perhaps more lively than his on the present occasion. I do not wonder that he found some difficulty in recognising an old acquaintance here, for the very gateway of the castle was so hidden by trees, and so overgrown with ivy, that, on a first approach, it is no easy matter to make out what it is.

We had left the carriage in which we drove to the spot; and a nice little girl, who told us she was ten years old, had accompanied us from a cottage near the entrance of the wood, with the keys of the castle; under her guidance, we were now to proceed to the inspection of the ruins.

Passing under the gateway, we ascended to what is generally

called the chapel; but which was evidently the guard-room, above the entrance, as the opening for the fall of the portcullis still remains in the walls. Here are three arches supported on rough columns, of a very ancient appearance. The flanking towers of the gateway lead to the ramparts; and all this part of the building, I am convinced, is of high antiquity: most likely the work of that De Pomeroy on whom the manor was bestowed by William the Conqueror, and who was the original founder of this once stupendous castle.

The most striking parts of the edifice, those situated within the interior court, are, as may be seen at a glance, of the Tudor age. The doorways of the roofless apartments, the mullions of the square-headed windows, etc., are all of the period of Henry the Seventh. Nor does this fact at all invalidate the account given by Prince, in the "Worthies of Devon," when he mentions that a Seymour, at a subsequent period, laid out twenty thousand pounds on this part of the building. Such a sum might easily, even in his days, be expended on improvements and repairs; and Prince states that this large expenditure was principally devoted to the costly decorations of the interior.

When Henry the Seventh ascended the throne, he took the Castle of Berry Pomeroy from the Baron la Zouch, on account of his having espoused the cause of Richard the Third, and bestowed it on that celebrated knight, Sir Piers Edgecumbe, who had rendered him such essential services, when he was Earl of Richmond, and only a pretender to the crown. Every part of the kingdom was so drained by the wars of the red and white roses, that the monasteries and churches were almost totally neglected, and many of the castles nearly ruined for want of repair, after the dilapidations they had undergone in these long protracted contests, so detrimental to the welfare of the kingdom at large.

Peace once more restored, by the union of the roses, the princes, barons, and knights had leisure to repair, rebuild, and adorn the ecclesiastical and civil edifices of every description. That they did so in the west is most conspicuous, as there is scarcely a



church or ancient mansion in that part of England, but it bears evidence of having undergone some repairs or additions about the time of Henry the Seventh.

That the gateway and the most ancient portions of Berry Pomeroy are of Norman construction, I do not doubt. That something was added to the original castle by the celebrated Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who figured in the reign of Richard the First, is very likely ; and that La Zouch also repaired and made additions to it is more than probable ; but that the whole of the interior building, the palace (for so it might be called), was the work of Sir Piers Edgecumbe, admits, I think, of no question, as it has none of the florid decoration, none of that mixture of the Grecian with the Gothic, which we may see in similar works of the time of Henry the Eighth, and still more so in the heavy and ungraceful architecture of the reign of Elizabeth.

After a careful survey of the whole, we could not help saying that Berry Pomeroy would be a most interesting ruin, if it were not so encumbered with brambles and trees, as in many places you can see nothing else. That portion of the castle which is stationed on the esplanade, above a rocky precipice at the back of the building, is so completely surrounded by trees that you are scarcely conscious you are near a precipice till on its very verge. Indeed, at this spot only heaps of rubbish indicate the foundations of exterior walls, long since fallen into ruin, and the castle is so much injured and dilapidated along the whole range of the esplanade, that only fragments of four lofty towers remain. Here, therefore, the ruin is most complete.

On our coming to this place, our little fairy-footed guide took us to the very verge of the precipice, and said—but I must not say what she said, as it would be anticipating ; suffice it then to mention, that on the very spot where such extraordinary circumstances are said to have occurred, the little creature related to us the romantic tradition respecting that Sir Henry de Pomeroy who flourished in the reign of Richard the First, and to whom I have already alluded as one of the lords of Berry Pomeroy Castle. This tale of “ old tradition ” I had before heard ; but there was

a double interest in listening to it under the shadow of these ancient walls.

The same intelligent little person added, "and this is the place also where the castle was taken in the time of Charles the First. They took it by guns—great guns planted on yonder hill," pointing, as she spoke, to a lofty height that was opposite to the eminence on which we stood. The story of the castle having been stormed on this side with artillery, sufficiently accounts for its being more battered than in any other part of the building. Some persons have, I know, doubted the fact of the siege during the civil wars; but so many circumstances exist to render it more than probable, that I entertain no doubt whatever of its truth. Whilst we were viewing the ruins, the child's mother arrived, and expressing a fear that her daughter had not been able to give us such information as might be required, she confirmed the little girl's story about the De Pomeroy in the time of Richard the First, and that concerning the battering of the castle by a cannonade in the days of the great rebellion.

The castle, as I have noticed, was evidently built at different periods, and should it continue a few years longer, the confusion to the tyro antiquary will be greater than it is already; as, for the purpose of strengthening the building, and also for securing it against the inspection of gratuitous visitors, walls with rude embattlements have recently been built from one part of the structure to another, giving it a patchwork appearance, very incompatible with picturesque beauty.

Being desirous of seeing the ruins if possible from below, we inquired if there was any path that would lead us thither. Informing us there was, the good woman put us again under the guidance of the little girl; who now took us to see a large beech-tree, which, she said, was considered to be as old as the castle. The tree is certainly of a very extraordinary size, but by no means of such great antiquity. Its lowest branches were at no mean height, and yet persons must have given themselves some trouble to climb it, as above them we saw several names cut in the bark.

By a winding path through the wood, we descended the hill, at the foot of which runs a little brook : this, collected into a pond, turns a mill, that, no doubt, belonged to the castle ; as (after scrambling up the opposite bank, whence we had a somewhat less obstructed view of the ruins), when we reached the summit, we found the mill was built with some share of ancient architectural ornament. Soon after seeing this, we bade adieu to Berry Pomeroy.

I must not here omit mentioning, that on the day after, when we were about half a mile on our road to Torquay, we once more met our little guide. We were much pleased to see her again, as I had regretted I had not asked her name. This I now did ; and the answer was Mary Chaff. Not exactly catching the last word, I asked her to spell her name ; and with all the naïveté of childhood, she began with the beginning, and spelt every letter of Mary Chaff with the utmost deliberation. With a laugh, and an additional present, we then took our leave of her, as she stood making her little courtesies as long as we were in sight.

As we drove on we took a last look at the distant towers of Berry Pomeroy Castle, our minds filled with the recollection of the impressive events there said to have occurred in the romantic age of Richard of the Lion Heart, that most gallant crusading king.

But these circumstances respecting Sir Henry de Pomeroy are not all that have come down to us. Another and no less striking tradition concerning the same Sir Henry is still preserved in Cornwall, in the neighbourhood of St. Michael's Mount, in which celebrated spot it is said to have occurred. This last-mentioned story is noticed, though very slightly, by a few lines in an ancient Chronicler ; and, as far as I have been able to ascertain, the truth of both traditions has never been questioned by any biographer or historian of ancient or modern times.

I have only to add that, having already published three works of fiction, and one topographical and historical work, connected with the counties of Cornwall and Devon, in the former

of which I availed myself of many fragments of tradition, to raise a "superstructure of fiction on a groundwork of truth," I was induced to undertake the present partly by my own wish, and partly from being urged to do so by more than one literary friend, natives of the west, who had repeatedly pointed out to me the traditionary fragments of Henry de Pomeroy, as a most desirable subject for my series of works on the counties of Cornwall and Devon.

One friend, now, alas ! no more, of considerable literary taste, so repeatedly urged me "to call up"—such was the playful phrase—the monks of Tavistock Abbey, in the days of their power and their pride, that I promised I would endeavour to combine with the subject in question some scenes of ancient times, in the far-famed and favoured Abbey of the Tavy.

For the rest, desirous to please the more serious classes of my readers, I can assure them, I have attempted to blend with the events and characters of imagination, such sketches of the manners and customs of the twelfth century, the period of the narrative, as I trust will be acceptable in an historical point of view : and though to cite ancient authorities, or modern antiquaries, for every instance of obsolete manners, would be an insufferable piece of pedantry in a romance, yet I feel it due to myself to state that whatever of this nature will be found in the following pages, it has the sanction of historical and unquestionable authority.

A. E. B.

*The Vicarage, Tavistock,  
April 10th, 1841.*

## CHAPTER I.

An old, old Monastery,—  
Withal it lies, perhaps, a little low,  
Because the monks preferred a hill behind,  
To shelter their devotion from the wind.  
It stood embosomed in a happy valley.

BYRON.

ABOUT the latter part of the twelfth century, the Abbey of Tavistock, of which so few remains now exist to attest its former splendour, was in the very height of its beauty, wealth, and power. A Saxon prince had been its founder; kings had contributed by their munificence to its opulence and its immunities. Barbarians and invaders had burnt and pillaged its sacred cells; but it had risen again, like the fabled phoenix, from its ashes, and with its renovated existence acquired a dignity and strength that soon placed it above every other religious house, save that of Glastonbury, in the west of England.

The Virgin and St. Rumon were the heavenly patrons to whom it was dedicated; and nobles, churchmen, and knights, were alike eager to promote the opulence and grandeur of so celebrated a foundation, nothing doubting that the good of their own souls was secured from being shaken by the enemy, by every stone of the building they helped to pile with so much liberality of spirit.


For learning, also, our abbey was in great repute. Almer the Saxon was its first abbot; and Livingus, afterwards bishop of St. Germain, in Cornwall, famous alike for his munificence, his misfortunes, and the high estimation in which he was held by Canute the Great, was in a manner its second founder; and in the abbey he had so benefited, Livingus, at last, laid his bones. There, likewise, did Edwy Atheling seek refuge from

the jealousies of the Danish usurper, and dying, was buried near the grave of Orgar, Earl or Heretoge of Devon, his Saxon ancestor, and the illustrious founder of the house. But to cite the names of all those to whom history has done honour, and who were all more or less connected with the Abbey of Tavistock, would be a task better suited to the professed antiquary, than to such chroniclers as ourselves, who propose to treat of persons and things of a very different character.

At the time of which we write, many portions of the abbey now remaining were not in existence, being of a more recent period. The monastery was then a noble, solid, but somewhat sombre pile, built in that style of architecture popularly called Saxon. It was characterised by massive towers and walls, not so lofty as they were strong; by deep-set, round-headed windows and doorways, with their short clustered columns and their circular mouldings, carved with the zig-zag and other fanciful ornaments that swept along the whole span of the arch. These doorways, like all other parts of the building, were too heavy for elegance; but, when viewed in their general outline, there was something simple and imposing in the massiveness of their architecture, that would have been destroyed by any additions of a more refined taste.

Indeed, the Anglo-Saxon or Norman architecture (for one was much the same as the other prior to the Conquest) was a style of building that disdained to rest its claims on the graces of detail, or the elegances of form. It was like one of those hardy barons, of the early times of which we write, who found in a solid bulk and a stout frame of sinews and muscles, with a noble aspect (calculated to awe rather than to captivate the beholder), a sufficient counterbalance for the want of that more light and graceful figure and appearance, which, through the influence of a different education, and a greater refinement of manners, characterised the youth of France and of England also, in the days of less personal hardihood.

On the banks of the Tavy (which takes its rise in the very heart of Dartmoor, and here made its rapid course amid pic-



turesque rocks, surrounded by woods, in the bosom of a valley watered by a thousand streams), stood this noble abbey, at once the support, the benefactor, and the glory of the country and the town from which it took its name. Its turreted towers and its strong embattled walls rose within a short space of the river, which in gentle murmurs, or when swollen by rains, in foaming waves, rolled at their feet.

The abbey church reared itself above those walls, and all other of the monastic buildings, and seemed, in the solemnity of its aspect, to give an air of quiet sanctity to the surrounding scene. These objects, most impressive in themselves, when viewed in combination were calculated to produce that romantic gloom, so replete with poetic feeling, which associates itself with scenes of seclusion and of holy and contemplative retirement from the world.

Within a small apartment belonging to the offices of this delightfully situated abbey, one summer's day towards the close of the twelfth century, there sat a little party enjoying themselves at noon, when the Lord Abbot, the monks, and some of the novices were taking what was called their *meridian*; that is, their day sleep: a very necessary repose in a house whose duties and offices in the church obliged most of its members to be out of their beds during no inconsiderable portion of the night.

The little party of which we now speak was of a social character, and entertained at the particular invitation of Thomas the cellarer, in his snug cell, conveniently placed where none of the more rigid officers of the household could be in any way annoyed, if now and then too obstreperous sounds of mirth and jollity, when the wine was in and the wit was out, should proceed from its confines; nor was it so near the inspectors as to be constantly exposed to the eye of any jealous *obedientary* as he was called, whose turn it might be for the week to keep a watchful look out over the brothers, to see that they lived within the rule of the godly St. Bennet, for Benedictine monks were those of our abbey.

True it is that the cellarer had little cause for fear, as few of the brotherhood were disposed to be at cross-purposes with him, or to look at all too closely after his ways ; for never, since the days of Livingus, had this excellent abbey been famed for anything like an observance of too much rule. It was not a house that made holiness a penance. The paths of peace, with somewhat of the plenty that peace is proverbially said to bring along with her, had been very generally held as the pleasantest path to heaven, by almost all the abbots, priors, sub-priors, and monks, vowed to the honour of the Virgin and St. Rumon, in this blessed society.

There was something in the very air of the house that was thriving ; for the brothers commonly grew fat upon it, notwithstanding fast-days and vigils were regularly proclaimed by the tolling of the bells, and the calends of the monastery. The cellarer, however, albeit the Lord Abbot was a very good apothecary, and the Lord Bishop of the diocese, according to the custom of the age, an excellent physician, took much credit to himself, that in Tavistock Abbey there was at all times a lean hospital and a fat kitchen.

This worthy Thomas was looked upon, if not as a father, yet somewhat as a godfather to the whole fraternity ; for he stood sponsor for them all in sundry particulars, promised in their names, that they should eschew all ale that was not up to the true strength of old Saxon huffcap ; and held that roasted swans were nothing too good at the feast of the Virgin in honour of her ascension ; and that carp, cooked in choice Malmsey wine, was a dish orthodox for days of fast and mortification ; and it may here be stated, that, among many other privileges, the cellarer possessed one calculated to make him exceedingly popular with his brother monks. A particular rule of the holy St. Bennet, which enforced a strict observance of the most poor and abstemious diet, was at all times hung up and displayed in a most conspicuous part of the house. But in order that it might not hang useless on the walls of the monastery (as we sometimes see an old hat or straw figure hang in a



bed of peas, to frighten the birds), it was wisely ordained that on certain days, four times in a year, this self-denying rule should be first read aloud, and afterwards enforced, except when the cellarer had previously asked an indulgence for the brothers. No wonder, therefore, an official who had the exercise of such a privilege as this within his own power, should be one towards whom most men looked with an eye of favour within the abbey walls ; and, indeed, on all occasions, the eatables and drinkables were so much under his control, that, like Doctor Pedro Rezio Turte Defuero, with the luckless governor, Sancho Panza, his wand or word could give wings to the dishes, however excellent, and lay them under interdict to all but the very heads of the house.

So influential a man as the cellarer was not without state. He had his court days, a sort of "petty sessions of his own ;" when swans, geese, turkeys, and most other feathered fowl, were brought before him, alive or dead, for account ; and butts of ale, cider, and wine, were laid in store by this provident official ; whilst the kitchener looked after the less aristocratic viands of bullocks, sheep, goats, and lambs. Indeed, so many and so various were the duties, privileges, and profits of this worthy, that we should weary our readers did we recite them at large. We shall, therefore, but add, that at this monastery he held also his court of thieves and robbers, and sometimes gave sentence on two-legged animals not quite so harmless as ducks and geese ; he had, likewise, power over the highways on the abbey lands, so that not a stick or stone could be removed without his consent. Though last, not least of his prerogatives, he was the man to whom the porter of the abbey gates was obliged to send the keys, after locking up for the night, when no one could enter or pass without the walls unless by his favour ; whilst his authority was absolute over all such as transgressed the rules, by being absent after complin, the last evening service in the church.

The cellarer's personal distinctions were many. He had his two palfreys ; his servant, in the livery of the house ; and in

addition to his comfortable monk's frock, he was allowed a good robe of clerk's cloth, with its hood of lamb's fur, to keep him warm and dry whenever he rode forth in foul weather for the service of the brotherhood, in whose welfare he took so lively an interest in all the seasons of game and venison throughout the year.

Brother Thomas was one of those who followed literally the injunction of the apostle ; for when merry—and the note of his cheerful spirits, like the crow of chanticleer, began at morning's dawn—he always sang psalms. He was jolly and rubicund ; had a full cheek, a sleek skin, a laughing eye, a nose like a peony in full blow, and a shaven crown that was round and bright as a new tennis-ball. His voice was full and sounding ; and so nice was his ear, that, like Master Nicholas, the clerk, in Chaucer's Tale, he made the gayest melody on the giterne, the ribible, or the saultrie, and

So sweetly, that all the chamber rong,  
And Angelus ad virginem he song,  
And often blessed was his merry throat.

Such was our cellarer. With him sat the sacrist, under whose control were church bells, banners, and tapers ; and the lantern, which it was his duty to carry before the priest, after he had deposited the text upon the altar, in his way to the lecture, now lay at his feet ready for the hour of service ; a sure note that he did not intend to budge from his present seat till the vespers might require his attendance in the church.

The sacrist was a little, thin, grave-looking man ; one that a sinner might mistake for a saint, though he was no hypocrite. But for all his grave appearance, he liked a jest in a quiet way, and was fond of a dry humour rather than a dry cup. He was considered to be wise ; but he held there was no wisdom like that which arises from counsel ; consequently, whenever he had any matter that he deemed to be of import to take in hand, he never ventured upon it till such time as he had considered the affair with his especial chum, Thomas the cellarer, over a flagon of Rhenish wine.

With these pious monks—who might both be said to hold office in the monastery, which, like most ministers in office, they had no desire to resign—sat a somewhat singular companion for men so holy within their own walls. This was a certain individual known all the country round, and a very great man in his own estimation, being no less a person than Patch, the domestic fool of my Lady Alicia de Beaumont, of Wilsworthy Castle, an edifice situated in the adjoining parish, and very nigh Dartmoor.

Patch was in the fool's attire common to his day. He was a little fellow; and though at the time of which we write there was often a certain degree of knavery and even of malice attached to the character of the fool, which under the mask of folly sometimes did much mischief, yet we must in truth say there was no natural malice in the composition of Patch; and as his noble mistress had never allowed him to be hunted and teased by the pages and the boys, nor to be worried in any way so as to call forth any evil dispositions, he was a very harmless creature, a mere fool for sport and amusement, such as was kept in every palace or castle of prince, bishop, baron, knight, or, in short, of any persons of rank of the period.

Patch, as we have said, was a little fellow, slight and active, with a handsome leg and foot, of which he was so proud, that his socks and his shoes were ever of the newest and the best; and he had fallen into the habit of walking with his toes turned out in a manner bordering on the ludicrous, from the great desire he felt that these distinctions of his person should attract observation. His head was small, and covered with curly black hair; his nose was not set straight on his face; all the features of which were irregular, and so flexible, that he had the power of contorting them into the most hideous and ludicrous grimaces; and even of giving a sort of caricature representation of sundry animals, whose sounds and voices he could imitate with wonderful truth and ease.

Patch had bright, black, fiery eyes, and a pair of shaggy eye-

brows not unworthy the glances that shot from the orbs beneath them, to which they gave both character and additional effect. His forehead, according to the system of Spurzheim and Gall, would have been held as indicative of small brains, as it receded very much, like the forehead of the dog. Truth to tell, an over portion of sound judgment was not the characteristic of Patch's mind under any circumstances.

The natural disposition of Patch was that of extreme good-nature. He would do anything, run anywhere, to serve anybody, who gave him but a goodnatured word; and as he had a sort of idle curiosity, that prompted him to learn all the news he could collect, he was ever on the alert, a professed gossip, and knew every woman, old or young, within the compass of his walks, and those were only limited by the strength of his legs in his wanderings from home.

Now the cellarer being a great lover of news also, but from his official character not being able to collect it quite so readily as one whose professed folly caused no questions he asked to be deemed impertinent, was not at all sorry to extract from Patch, at the very cheap rate of a cup of wine, all the intelligence he could gather, respecting divers noble persons and families in the neighbourhood. These morsels of news were not simply as choice scraps for his own entertainment; for the Lord Abbot was not inapt to collect from the cellarer as the cellarer did from Patch, the gossip of the country, though from a very different motive. By means, therefore, of that ingenious art of cooking news, so practised and perfected in this small town, even in its days of Saxon celebrity, adding here, and twisting and turning there, and putting in a few grains of scandal and the sauce of a little malice, it was easy to serve as dainty a dish of news for the table of my Lord Abbot, as could possibly be desired on any occasion of wonderment, idleness, or envy. Yet we do not wish to imply that Brother Thomas thus gathered his intelligence for any especial purpose of mischief; for we can safely aver he was a very friendly man over a cup of wine,—that he was singularly good-humoured when he was

pleased ; and so far was he from doing wrong by premeditation, that he never even suspected he could do wrong at all.

The cellarer now sat with his two friends round a little table, on which stood no insignificant portion of a delicate roasted swan ; flanked by a loaf of monks' bread, and some manchets of the best simnel. Of choice liquors there was abundance ; from portly huff-cap, malmsey, and metheglin, down to simple cow-slip wine ; for the cellarer, having absolute rule over these matters, kept a little buffet well stored at hand, the contents being selected from the treasures of his own especial crypt ; and if any objections were made to a provision so tempting to solitary indulgence, the plea of "only by way of sample," was an answer prompt and never questioned.

One other individual helped to complete the party ; a hound, a favourite of the abbot, when he made up a company to go to his hunting-seat at Morwell-house ; and never till of late had the dog been left behind on any such occasions of joyous sport. He now lay stretched at the cellarer's feet.

"And pray," said Patch, as he put down the flagon, from which he had taken no small draught, "what ails Woden there ?" pointing to the hound, for the names of the ancient Saxon deities were often given at this period, as a mark of contempt, by the Normans, to their dogs. "Woden hath become something like me of late, more to be found in the house than in the field ; looking after the porridge, and letting go free the hares. Woden hath truly the wisdom of years growing upon him, as well as some of its gray hairs ! he likes best the fireside and a soft cushion ; wherefore is it that he goes not forth to the field ?"

"His scent fails him," replied the cellarer ; "and my Lord Abbot likes not a hound at fault."

"Blow vinegar in his nose," said the Fool ; "'tis a sovereign remedy to restore his scent to a hound, or to call up a lethargic man. And do you, Sir Cellarer, in your wisdom construe me this. Wherefore is our King Richard like the hound with a vinegared nose ?"

The cellarer studied a minute ; looked up at the ceiling and down on the floor, then at the grinning and self-satisfied propounder of the question, whose very air seemed to say that his meaning lay too deep for a common wit. Then the cellarer rubbed his hand over his shaven crown, and finally repeated the question, weighing every word of it with the slowest delivery, and at last looked just as wise as he did before.

"Thou canst not hit it," said Patch. "Do thou try thy wits, Master Sacrist. Wherefore is the hound with the vinegared nose, like our King Richard?"

"Why, may be," replied the sacrist, "it may have been as startling to his highness, as vinegar to a hound's nose, to find himself on a sudden prisoner to the Duke of Austria, when he looked to return to his good land of England ; for such things are apt to startle a man mightily ; therefore I conceive——"

"Anything but that which comes nigh the matter," said the Fool. "Now, here 'tis. The royal Richard hath borrowed from my trade of late, and hath played the fool, at no man's bidding but his own. He hath left his kingdom to go after foreign wars, and now it is like to leave him. Even so, then, like to a once brave hound that hath lost his scent for the game, did our gallant king, whilst following after Saladin abroad, lose all scent of the treason that was going on at home, till, like vinegar in the nose, his brother John's treachery, being suddenly brought to his knowledge, waked him up with its stinging ; and then would he return to look after his affairs in England fast enough, but may be too late, for the Duke of Austria lay in the way, and our fighting king was made a prisoner. Now do you take mine enigma?"

"'Tis far-fetched," said the sacristan ; "thy wits are muddy."

"Not so is thy ale," replied Patch ; "and I will even crush another cup with thee for fellowship, for my legs are weary, and the spirit that sustains them somewhat faint ; it needeth cheering."

"Hast thou been far to-day?" inquired the cellarer ; "at what

taverners hast thou been news-gathering; anything stirring? anything worth the carrying?"

"Ay, marry is there," said Patch. "The Queen-mother, the royal Eleanor, is come over, with a power from Wales, in support of the rights of the king. I had the news this morning, as I called in at the Lord de St. Loe's buttry hatch; and there is more news still."

"What is it?" inquired the cellarer, eagerly.

"Why, 'tis thought," continued Patch, after a pause, "that widows will rise in price, and maidens become cheaper, by reason of the ransom of King Richard."

"How, fool, how?" said the cellarer.

"I will tell you anon," answered Patch; "and I had it from a clerk of good account, one who can both read and write, and hath a turn for gramery; he, therefore, knoweth the truth of things. The king's ransom is stated at the value of his highness's valour, not at that of his people's means; so besides lands to be yielded up in France and elsewhere, there are more pounds to be paid in money—payment in tale—than I can reckon up by memory, though I can count with any man by the fingers; and now comes the cream of the matter and of my discourse—the fee for marrying a widow, who is under crown custody, is to be equal to that of marrying a maid under the same: till this thing happened, the fee for marrying a widow was but half as much. And then the abbeyes, it is said, are to give the value of a year's wool."

"Only those of the orders of Cisteaux and of Sempringham," said the cellarer; "they were ever forward in putting forth claims for privileges to King Richard, and now will they find the truth of the proverb—'Many go for wool and come home shorne.' The blessed brothers of St. Benedict will, I trust, get off more easily. It is not good to tax those who are the fountains of learning in the land. Learning hath its labours, and ought to have its immunities; for we, who spend our days in abstinence and study, and in fasts, and our nights in prayer——"

"Pray, brother," said Patch, "when are the feast days of this

house? for, seeing that thy fasts are so very tolerable, I would gladly partake of them. I never here taste worse fare than thy simnel or wheaten bread, though at home I have often the brown loaf. Thou must have an honest miller, or a miller's daughter, that favours thee from the choicest sack."

"Holy Mary! there she stands," said the cellarer, and he pointed, as he spoke, to a laughing face, like that of a young Hebe, peeping in through a small open window, which looked towards a very convenient low door in the abbey walls opening on the banks of the river near the mills,



## CHAPTER II.

Ful brighter was the shining of hire hewe  
Than in the towr the noble yforged newe  
But of hire song, it was as loud and yerne,  
As any swallow sitting on a berne.  
Thereto she coude skip, and make a game,  
As any kid or calf following his dame.  
Hire mouth was swete as braket or the meth,  
Or horde of apples, laid in hay or heth;  
Winsing she was, as is a jolly colt,  
Long as a mast, and upright as a bolt.

CHAUCER.

THE little window, at which appeared the plump, round, and rosy face of Grace Bolt, the miller's daughter, was one whose services were more than of a twofold nature. Most glazed apertures in walls and houses, civil or ecclesiastic, are considered as merely useful for the purposes of admitting air and light. But the window in the cell of our cellarer, if fame did him no injustice, was used, and not unfrequently, for things of a very different and far more substantial nature; for nothing less than admitting goods, living or otherwise, that were generally held as contraband to the monks. A friend, or a boon companion, was sometimes smuggled in; or a dainty in Lent; or report had gone so far as to say, now and then a damsel. In short, anything that could not pass the watch and ward of the porter's gates unchallenged.

Grace Bolt was a blithe merry maiden, wild as a Dartmoor colt, and pure as the flour that had been thrice sifted at her

father's mills. She was a pet with the cellarer, in a harmless way. He was, as we have before intimated, a good-natured man, a dear lover of gossip, and had so much of the milk of human kindness in his disposition, that he entertained a tenderness for the female sex at large,—that delighted to expand itself in acts of kindness to pretty children, were they little girls of eight, or blooming ones of eighteen years old. Nor was he less goodnatured towards their mothers, or even their grandmothers, provided the latter would give him a seat in the chimney nook, and a cup of spiced wine, to season a gossip, and did not require of him too often the kiss of peace.

The very cockles of the cellarer's heart were moved at seeing a happy, frank, youthful face, shining and sparkling, mouth, eyes, and cheeks, with the joyance of a gay spirit; even, as he would say, the weir of the Tavy sparkled in the sunshine. And then he liked to keep a fine peach, or a choice store of apples, to give one to Grace, and to see her eat it, showing her white teeth, and looking roguish, as he chuckled her under the chin. And sometimes, in graver moments, as she enjoyed this dainty of the orchard, the cellarer, good man, would sermonize a little, making his subject, like the great French divines, apply to the circumstances before him. In such moments, he would point out to her the danger of eating forbidden fruit (always accompanying the lecture with an injunction never to trespass on my Lord Abbot's garden), and the fatal consequences of curiosity to the mother of mankind. In illustration of which, our worthy brother would remind her there was a beauteous piece of carving in oak to be seen about the altar of St. Mary Magdalen, in the abbey church, where all the Gothic devils were represented as pampering and making much of the serpent, their great master, when going forth in this reptile guise on the deadly work of temptation.

Grace Bolt received these tokens of the cellarer's regard with all the gratitude they deserved, and she really felt for the worthy man something of that duty and affection which a good child feels for an indulgent parent. She often, therefore, took

occasion to slip in at the postern door in the wall, that being the nearest way for bringing in the bags of flour, and followed the sacks even as she was wont to do when she was a "tottering little girl" of but four or five years old ; and she had grown up so gradually under the eye of the monks, that even the severest among them almost forgot she was now a woman, and none were shocked at a sight so familiar to them as the rosy cheeks and smiling lips of Grace, if any one of the brothers chanced to meet her near the little window we have named. As for going beyond it, or trespassing on the abbot's private grounds, it was a thing quite out of the question, though we will not say but that Grace had a curious eye to them. She would have liked much to ramble amongst their long alleys of sycamore, and their beautiful terraces, and to see the carp play, or come and be caught, in any one of the three stew-ponds that were within these precincts of the domain. Grace had in her own person all those points of character in which a good-natured man most delights. There was, therefore, sympathy between herself and the cellarer ; and, moreover, the additional tie of mutual kindnesses, where the one party is willing and the other grateful ; there are few stronger bonds. Grace was plump, tall, and active, had a neat ankle and well-turned arm, locks of curly brown, and a pair of dark eyes that shone like bugles of jet. She could not frown, for the perpetual smile on her lips would not let her ; the laughing eyes, indeed, forbade even the attempt at putting on an angry look ; if teased, she could only, like other good-humoured but petted children, shake her tiny hand, stamp with her little foot, and say a pouting word or two that did but make her look the more pretty ; so that it became a real pleasure to vex her a little sometimes in order to forgive her, or to soothe her into a return of her sportiveness and mirth ; even as fond mothers delight in those rainbow smiles in their infants that dimple their soft cheeks whilst the tears yet hang upon them.

Grace also was a damsel of taste ; indeed she rather dressed beyond her degree, notwithstanding it was a high offence in

a vassal to do so. But Grace was a Church vassal, and she had found the most indulgent rule from her masters the monks. The sub-prior himself had more than once given her a word out of Solomon, about the humble attire of women. On these occasions, the modest way in which Grace took the rebukes of her vanity (a fault, however, which she did not reform), disarmed wrath, so that the sub-prior was obliged to content himself with having given the warning, and with the recollection that the daughters of Tyre were celebrated for their vain love of dress.

Grace's taste in dress was more for variety than uniformity. She had, perhaps, an eye to a nosegay, where blues, greens, and reds, are gaily mixed together ; and certainly a tailor, or master fashioner, might have culled a pattern-book from the many samples of bright colours she wore on her back. Her dress is so great a curiosity in these days, that we must say a word about it.

She wore a stammel petticoat of orchard green ; a pair of new scarlet hose of sey, and half socks of Cordovan leather. Her girdle was of Coventry blue ; her bodice of ginger-coloured cendal, furred with lamb's skin ; cherry-coloured knots and laces fastened her kirtle in the front, and tied up her sleeves ; and her fillet round the head was of nun's white, surmounted by a volupure, or veil, of Paris facture.

The cellarer, on seeing Grace's pretty face peeping in at the window, insisted she should come in and take some fruit. There was a fine dish of ripe cherries standing on the table, flanked by one of pippins. She had been accustomed to partake of such good things ever since she used to be handed in, like a kitten, or a puppy, through the window, when a child. True it is Grace had outgrown the possibility of making such entries and exits ; but as, according to the vulgar saying among the Turks (then commonly known in England by means of the Crusaders), "if Mahomet's coffin won't come to us, we must go to Mahomet;" even so, when Grace Bolt could no longer get in through the window, the window had been accommodated to get her in ; for the cellarer, long before we opened this history, had caused

it to be more widened in its dimensions than a strict adherence to the architecture of the period would admit in a building of such pretensions.

Through this window Grace was now, therefore, invited to come in ; and as she had for years been as friendly and familiar with the good cellarer as with her father's great dog ; was a rustic in education, and, though perfectly modest, knew none of the refinements in manners even of her own day, she made no difficulties, but accepted at once the invitation ; took the helping hand that brother Thomas offered to her, gave a spring, like a fawn at its gambols under the greenwood tree, and scrambling in at the window without any difficulty, sat down immediately at the table, and sipped the cup of cowslip wine in a modest way.

"And where is thy father gone to-day, wench?" said the cellarer ; "I saw him not with the villains who brought up the sacks of corn."

"Father is gone," answered Grace, "to seek the Lady Alicia, and to beg my lady to be so good as to give order that the new miller, who has set up at Cudlipp town, may keep to his own bounds, and not slock away our folk to take their grist to his mill."

"And what makes thee in that holiday guise, my lass?" said the cellarer ; "this is not fair day!"

"No," replied Grace ; "but there's talk of the great folk coming from Exeter ; and all the town will be out to-day ; and so there's to be a morris, and a jongleur, and a turgator, come all the way from over seas ; and he has seen Saladin with his own eyes ; and has heard the speaking stone at Jerusalem ; and seen a man that tried to do it, but who could not drown himself in the Dead Sea. And besides all these, there's to be a wonderful doctor ; a pilgrim that cures all diseases by miracle, and——"

"I see," said the Fool, "you are, my most pretty Finestra, making yourself gay as the popinjay to go and see how many of my trade can be made by listening to one travelling minstrel who returns from the Holy Land. Thou wilt have to pay coin for this. Marry, wench, it will cost thee at least an esterling ;

for quartered money passes not current with your minstrel. Now, for my part, give me but a silver sixpence, and I will entertain the whole town for it, Holy Land fashion, and never be at fault for lack of a story, but rather for breath."

"La!" said Grace, "what mean you by that, Master Patch?"

"Why, look you," replied Patch, "get me an old pilgrim's gown that hath gaping wounds in it, one only fit for the lazar; stick me a cockleshell here in my bonnet; give me scrip and staff with an old palm branch, stolen out of church after Palm Sunday;—and see if I make not as reverend a palmer, and as good a 'potecary, as ever came home to cure folk by miracle from the East."

"La! Master Patch," said Grace, "you could never get the trick of it."

"Never get the trick of it!" repeated Patch, "only get me the old palmer's gown, and see how I will do it."

"You have never attempted to doctor your mistress, I will warrant," said the sacrist; "yet, if report speaks truth, she needs the mediciner."

"Why, look you," said Patch, "the point is a nice one; and may be, Master Sacrist, there are disorders which palmers dare not meddle with, which the leech cannot cure, and which are only fit to be dealt with by men of frock and cowl; but I say nothing, for what saith Solomon, a 'prating fool shall fall.'" Patch nodded, winked, looked wise, and held his tongue, with that peculiar air which persons affect when they would intimate that they could tell a great deal more, well worth knowing, did they choose to tell it.

This was the very thing to excite the curiosity of the cellarer; and, determined to come to the bottom of the mystery, he forthwith plied Patch with all manner of civil and cajoling speeches; produced from his secret store the choicest flask of a foreign wine; and after filling up another cup, and seasoning it with a little more compliment, Patch's vanity in becoming the person in company to whom all the rest paid the deference of listening, got the better of the little judgment he could boast, and he

became as eager to talk as he had before been shy of entering on the matter. The cellarer drew his stool closer to the speaker, not to lose a word of his discourse. The sacrist listened carelessly, but still he listened ; and Grace Bolt stared with all her eyes as Patch began with the very startling question—

“Did you never hear that by some my lady is thought to be possessed?”

“La!” said Grace, “what is that?”

“Possessed? Holy Mary!” exclaimed the cellarer, “how can that be, when Father Hilary hath the keeping of her soul?”

“Say not of her soul, but of her conscience,” said Patch; “and that the devil will trouble, in spite of all the holy man’s care, or I know not a hawk from a kestrel. But no matter for that,” he added, putting his finger to his nose. “Possessed some folk say she is, sure enough.”

“She should be brought bound to the high altar of our church then,” said the sacrist; “and I ought to have my ringing and my candle-fees for the same; it were a defrauding of the church else, and a neglecting a poor suffering soul.”

“She ought not only to be exorcised, but to have the evil spirit taken out of her by the prayers of the monks,” said the cellarer.

“She should make a waxen heart, and offer it with six candles to the blessed image of Our Lady,” said Grace Bolt.

“She should send a written schedule of whatever sins lay heaviest upon her mind, to have it hid under the altar-cloth of St. Rumon on Ash Wednesday,” said the sacrist; “when, after sin-dole paid, she would find not a sin left on the scroll; the parchment would come out from the altar as fair as her own conscience.”

“Not so fast, holy men,” said Patch; “why now you run before the doctor, for he neither lets blood nor drenches before he handles the pulse, and learns what may be the disease of the patient. But you ply your remedies as the Duke of Austria and the Emperor of Germany do their demands for our king’s ransom, the one on the back of the other, and each with an eye

to himself. You have not heard how my lady is possessed, and yet you slip in a way in a mighty hurry for her cure. I said she was possessed, but I said not with a devil."

"But you said the devil troubled her."

"Ay, that may be," said Patch, "but not possessed her. Why, I tell you, Sir Priest, she is possessed by the witch melancholy; and there is no worse spirit, at least, to my thinking."

"Melancholy!" exclaimed the cellarer, "and she the mistress of Wilsworthy Castle, and of as goodly an estate as any Norman baron, with all its immunities, dependencies,—its serfs, vassals, and villeins, sack and sock, and toll and team;—all this, and she melancholy! I will never believe it. There never was woman so widowed, and so endowed, that held her grief past the term of her weeds."

"Nay, for matter of that, I don't say that she mourns for her widowhood, nor yet that she pines for a husband," said Patch; "seeing that no man thrives who woos her, though she has had as many suitors as Queen Penelope. There are times and seasons when there is no knowing in what mood to take her; for sometimes she is high and proud, and will admit no approach to her person. At others, she is altogether gentle and sad, and will talk of St. Dunstan's dove, and wish that it might come and settle in her bosom; and then her mood will change, and she will look wild, and ask who it is that is come to the castle gates, or did we meet no stranger, when, perhaps, nobody has crossed the threshold but a begging palmer, or the house steward and his lads."

"May be," said Grace, "she has seen something."

"Seen something!" replied Patch, "I will warrant me she has; and seen something few of us would like to see—a great deal of trouble, sorrow, and change, and very few quiet nights, and as few quiet days. For some folk do say that her husband, the late Lord de Wilsworthy and de Beaumont——"

"Was what?" cried the cellarer; "what do some men say of him?"



"I will not tell you," said Patch, reconsidering the matter "it is enough for me to tell what I know, and not to repeat the talk of other folk. Fool I may be, but not fool enough to put my spoon into scalding porridge, and commend it to my own lips: no, no, say what you yourself know, and no harm done; but talk of other people's tellings, and you may quickly find the cudgel on your own back that should be bestowed on that of another."

"And what hast thou known, Master Patch?" said the cellarer. "Talking is dry work, take another cup; you shall not drink beyond the first knob; for though we are of Norman blood, in our cups we hold Saxon measure.\* You were but now at Wilsworthy Castle, and the subject your lady——"

"Here's a health to her," said Patch. "You must know, then, that our Lady Alicia will sometimes do very strange things: she will absent herself for days together from her household, and nobody knows whither she goes; some say on penances, so secret and so severe that no mortal eye must look on them. Others say she has a vow, and not a few that she has a familiar; but that I will never believe, for nobody keeps a spirit for their own torment, though often to torment others; and whatever spirit our Lady Alicia may consult, it is one that never brings a smile on her own face, as I can witness. She was bad enough in Normandy, but worse since she has returned to merry England."

"She should get her a good husband, a blithe bachelor, some knight of renown, or lord of high degree, or even squire of low degree. To live alone is never well for maid or widow, unless she be vowed as a spouse of holy Church," said the cellarer, crossing himself.

"It cannot be that which grieves her," replied Patch; "for she paid no less a sum than a thousand pounds, tower weight, to the late King Henry, that she might not be forced to marry till such time as it might please her own fancy to do so."

\* The Saxons had knobs fixed within their cups for measurement, answering to our quarts, pints, half-pints, etc.

"And did the king grant her suit?"

"Ay, that he did," said Patch; "and nothing loth was Henry to do so, and to clutch the gold; for it was at the time he had his war of railing tongues, and hot disputes, and bannings, and excommunications with Thomas-à-Becket; and there was nothing to be done at Rome with the Pope and the cardinals, to lull the storm, without money; and so gold was as welcome to the royal treasury at that time, as grist is to thy father's mill, Grace," added the speaker, as he looked at the pretty wondering face of the miller's maid.

"And if report tells truth," observed the sacrist, "the present king, his highness King Richard, was not sorry to have a like sum from the Lady Alicia, in another matter of wardship,—I mean for the younger lady, the Lady Adela de Marmoutier, I think, is the Norman damsel's name. How went that matter?"

"Marry, thus," answered Patch. "The Lady Alicia had an only brother, a Norman baron of great estate; and after her husband had perished in the Holy Land, she found much comfort in his affection. Well, this noble baron died also, as a noble baron should do, in battle; and thus was my poor lady bereft both of husband and brother, with no earthly creature kindred to her in blood, except a little child, her niece, the orphan daughter of her deceased brother, and sole heiress to all his castles and lands. To take charge of this infant girl, my lady passed over seas into Normandy, but could not settle matters about her till she came back again to England."

"And there was some dispute, we heard," said the sacrist, "between her and our King Richard, concerning the wardship of the child. Was it not so?"

"There was," said Patch, "that nothing but the king's necessity and my lady's gold could settle it. Gold and necessity are two arbitrators in a quarrel, that soon kiss and make peace, and so the Lady Alicia paid his highness as much for the wardship of the Lady Adela, as she had before paid to his royal father to secure her own liberty for widowhood or marriage: a thousand marks were told down, and she forthwith stept into the king's

place, and became lawful guardian to her own orphan niece. This done, she once more passed over seas into Normandy, took possession of the castle of Marmoutier in the name of her ward, lived there for a while, then travelled on holy pilgrimages to many a distant shrine, and has at length returned to England with her young charge, who is now a woman grown."

"Wisely has she done," said the cellarer, "for Philippe of France, many men think, hath a shrewd eye on Normandy, now that the princely Richard lies like a caged lion in his cell. Philippe, it is thought, will stir a war there, for the mastery of the land. The Lady Alicia and her fair ward are safer far in England at such a time."

The discourse had arrived at this point, when it was very suddenly disturbed by a slip of a boy, one of the scholars of the abbey school, who acted as a sort of page to the cellarer.

This lad was alert and shrewd, one who delighted to assist in any matter that transgressed the rules of the house, for the pure pleasure of doing so, and of exercising that degree of adroitness and wit that is necessary to prevent detection, or to frame an excuse when unavoidably detected. The boy was very useful to the cellarer, and had found his account in being so, especially in the fruit season, or when any sports were going on in the neighbourhood or the town.

He was always prying about, and from some hidden nook had seen Grace Bolt slip in at the cellarer's window. Knowing how much her presence within the abbey walls was contrary to rule, he now came to give notice, in order that the coast might be cleared; as he had just seen, from one of the towers, *a progress*, as it was called, moving along the Okehampton road, towards the good town of Tavistock. By a banner and the cross being carried before the chief rider, with the black cloaks and white scapularies of the rest, the lad was sure the progress must be a body of churchmen.

"A banner and a cross, carried before the chief rider. It must be the archdeacon, then," exclaimed the cellarer; "what doth he here?—our monastery is exempt! Up, my lass, up,

never mind the pippins; our lad, here, shall run down with a basket of them presently to the mill,—up, and out of the window with you,—the archdeacon is not a man to play with. He hath not the absent mind of our Lord Abbot, who heeds not trifles that occur around him, when he is busied in his own concerns. Neither has he the consideration of the prior, nor the good-nature of the sub-prior. The archdeacon hath a piercing vision,—therefore up and away with you. And you, Master Patch, had best not linger. Though you might have excuse,—you bear a message from your mistress, or a dozen of tapers or so from the noble Lady Alicia to St. Rumon's shrine."

"I bear candle ends for my lady, I!" said Patch indignantly. "I would have you to know such offices are performed by the varlets of our house, and not by me, who wear no silver collar. I am a free man, and am neither serf nor thrall, and moreover this is not Candlemas for the setting up of lights. I shall out at the great gates, even as I came in at them; and if I meet the archdeacon, I may chance to tell him that there are more fools than one who come on errands to the abbey, as he may find to his cost, if he have any matter to debate with Abbot Baldwin. But mum for that, I will even depart."

"Do so," said the cellarer, "and now I bethink me, 'tis best you should go forth by the great gates; but you, Grace, you must once more out of the window." And without further speech the good man assisted her, and she was soon on the outside of his apartment. He stayed but to charge her to slip away by the postern door ere it should be locked, and not to say to any one where she had been.

Having given these directions, the cellarer closed the window, hurried off Patch, and, with the assistance of the sacrist, cleared the tables of cups and flagons; washed his face, to cool the heat of rather a copious refreshment, and went forth to seek the sub-prior, to confer with him on some matters of import, before the arrival of the archdeacon.

### CHAPTER III.

A clerk ther was of Oxenforde also,  
That unto logicke hadde long ago.

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But all be that he was a philosophre,  
Yet hadde he but litel gold in cofre,  
But all that he might of his frendes hente,  
On bokes and on learning he it spente,  
And besily gan for the soules praie,  
Of them, that gave him wherewith to scolaie.  
Of studie toke he moste cure and hede,  
Not a word spake he more than was nede,  
And that was said in form and reverence,  
And short, and quicke, and ful of high sentence,  
Sonning in moral vertue was his speech,  
And gladly would he learn, and gladly teach.

CHAUCER. .

ABBOT BALDWIN, the superior of our monastery, was of Norman blood. Though he shared to the fullest extent in the pride and spirit of oppression with which the victorious Normans harassed the unhappy Saxons and their aggrieved descendants, yet, with more prudence than most of his countrymen had displayed, he forbore to express his scorn of the vanquished by those outward demonstrations of contempt which are so offensive to a conquered people, still smarting under the yoke ; and still, with the bitterness of unavailing regret, cherishing the recollection of the privileges they had lost by the overthrow of their fathers in their own land.

Thus, though invested with arbitrary power from the high station he held in the west, Abbot Baldwin and his rule were

not other than acceptable both to Norman and Saxon; for if the latter remembered he was of the blood of their detested conquerors, they also recollected how different he was in his conduct towards themselves, to the tyrannical feudal barons, who frequently treated them with far less consideration than they bestowed on their hounds; bought and sold them with their lands; scourged, imprisoned, or hanged them, as slaves and criminals, on the slightest suggestions of their interest, passion, or caprice.

Abbot Baldwin had also another strong hold on the good will of the Saxons. The school denominated Saxon, originally instituted by Orgar, the founder of the abbey, and suppressed in consequence of the havoc made by the Danes, who burnt the sacred edifice soon after its foundation, had been revived by Abbot Baldwin; he had even restored to it its ancient name—the Saxon School. Had the abbot given the fallen Thanes, the Ceorls, the Socmen, and even those of a far humbler grade, gold or precious stones to console them for their poverty and degradation, he could not have gratified them so much as he did by this simple act of restoring to them their school, at so ancient and important a place as the Abbey of Tavistock.

The truth is, that Baldwin was a learned man; and feeling desirous to preserve in its purity the Saxon tongue (which was more a curious than a copious language), to prevent its being utterly lost and confounded with the jargon of Norman French, then beginning to mingle itself with the ancient Saxon in common conversation, he determined to revive the school for the youth of the conquered people, where no tongues but the Latin and the pure Saxon were to be taught, though the various sciences of the period were to be admitted without restraint. The revival of such an institution was most welcome to the public; and even Norman youths were not refused instruction, provided, like the less favoured race, they would strictly conform to the rules as well as the learning of the school. From this cause Abbot Baldwin became as popular with the Saxons,

and, indeed, with all parties, as any abbot could be, who, born in Normandy, had been transferred to England, and was there put over so large a body of men, and so many thousand acres, with all the live stock, both human and bestial, upon it, at a period when slavery, with its attendant hardships and injustice, was a part and parcel of the laws of the land.

In his person, Abbot Baldwin was tall and well formed, and had that grace about him inherent in men who are cast in Nature's finest mould. He had numbered nearly sixty years, but had never known hardship nor sickness; and as he was far from being one who deemed person of too little consequence to require attention, he had bestowed so much care upon the preservation of his own, that he looked, when past the middle age, many years younger than he really was. His features were regular, and of a noble cast; his forehead high, with a pair of as bright and piercing eyes as ever shot their glances from beneath cowl or hood. And we may here be permitted to remark, that the hood, when worn so as to throw a shade over the upper part of the head, gives to it that air of grandeur and awe which the partially revealed and partially concealed never fails to create: especially in a head, like Abbot Baldwin's, characterised by intellect and expression. His mouth was finely and delicately formed; such as we very commonly see in persons of high birth and the most refined education.

Though our abbot was stately in his attire when he rode forth, or went into society on occasions of ceremony, yet his dress in common was simple; being only distinguished from the rest of the brothers by its finer material, and by the precious rosary of gold and amber that depended from his girdle. A crucifix also of like metal was suspended from a gold chain about his neck. For the rest, his scapular, an upper garment worn beneath the black tunic, was of fine white cloth; and over the tunic (that was girt round the middle with a leathern belt), he wore a mantle of black samite. To this was attached a cowl long and peaked, which, at the pleasure of the wearer,

could be drawn over the head and about the face, or be cast back upon the shoulders, so as to leave bare the shaven crown, with its fringe of short hair suffered to grow round the head, just above the ears, like a wreath or chaplet. Though the abbot was privileged to wear a cap lined with fur, Baldwin seldom did so within doors ; and by the humility of his general attire, it would seem as if he only adopted one of a more costly nature when he deemed it necessary to the ceremonial of his high office. Common eyes measure the dignity of the individual by the awe inspired by his presence ; and common men feel respect for the office in proportion to the power which they fancy is indicated by the wealth and splendour of the official.

At the time we introduce Baldwin to our reader, he was seated in an apartment of the abbey that was not liable to intrusion, the abbot's hall. The ceiling and panelling were of oak ; the rafters of the former were black with age and smoke ; for the huge stone chimney that stood at the lower end of the hall sent, in every high wind, more than half its smoke, with the eddies that roared down its tunnel, into the room.

On the panelling towards the upper end of this apartment hung a long and narrow piece of tapestry, the work of the nuns of St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall ; of whose house the sister of our abbot was the prioress. This tapestry represented in worsted on cloth the acts of sundry Cornish saints of eminence, and more especially those of St. Michael. The principal subject was the saint's contest with the devil for the body of Moses. In it the archangel appeared in chain mail, with the cross on his shield like a crusader. And in order to paint the devil a little blacker, the godly sisters who executed the work had given him, as well as their simple skill could represent it, the physiognomy of a Jew ; the foul fiend's long beard, gaberdine, and yellow cap, being all characteristic of that despised and unhappy race.

A window of great beauty terminated the room opposite the dais. It was magnificent though somewhat gloomy, and shed



its subdued light upon the pavement of glazed tiles in streams of variegated colours. This, called the St. George's window, was the gift of a Ferrers, a knight banneret, who had been a very great benefactor to the abbey, and had not confined his donations to the church alone.

There were also in this chamber a few early hard Gothic paintings on panelling, principally consisting of rude attempts at the portraits of the founders of the abbey. Orgar, in the odour of sanctity, at the gate of heaven, presenting to St. Peter the abbey church of Tavistock, which he held in his hand as he kneeled to the Apostle, who, on the sight of it, opens to him the gates of bliss; whilst a row of cherubim are singing, piping, harping, fiddling, and ringing the handbells, to welcome him to heaven.

The picture which Abbot Baldwin presented in his own person, as he sat in the hall we have described, would have been a fine one for Rembrandt. It was a picture calculated to touch the imagination. There, within the shade of the gorgeous window, and beneath a carved canopy of oak, where the arches and stone pillars supported a roof of Gothic gloom, sat the abbot in the silence of monastic meditation. His manly figure was striking, though shrouded in the garments of a black monk. His cowl was thrown back, as his head leaned on his hand and the arm rested on that of his chair. The expression of his face was severe, thoughtful, and majestic. The brow was in repose, the muscles of the mouth relaxed, the eye fixed, but not on outward objects; for at that moment Baldwin had neither sight nor attention but for the things within his own deep-thinking and energetic mind.

Did we continue to look upon the scene with the eye of a painter, we should say it was finely finished by a second figure which, soon after, entered and completed its most picturesque effect.

Baldwin struck with a wooden hammer on the table before him, and the summons was answered by a youth about seventeen years old, of a most manly aspect; his limbs though slight

were muscular; and the dress he wore, that of a Saxon boy, seemed well calculated to show to advantage his tall and handsome person. He was attired in a tunic of red woollen cloth, which descended to the knees, and had long close sleeves. The throat was bare. The tunic was bound round the waist by a girdle, or, as it was called in the Saxon, a *rooc*, beautifully embroidered with a running pattern of flowers and birds in silks of divers colours. Over his shoulders he wore a short mantle, like the Roman Pallium, fastened at the shoulders by a brooch of wrought silver. On his wrists he had bracelets of carved ivory and silver; a collar of the same description was about his throat, and from it depended a *Bulla* or amulet, a charmed gem (a piece of superstition long retained by his people), formed of an engraved amethyst. It bore upon it the head of St. Luke. The charm in the present instance was worn to keep off leprosy, a disease then gaining ground in Europe, having been originally brought from the East by the Crusaders, who frequently brought home nothing else from the holy wars. The dress, which from its curiosity, as well as its antiquity, we have here described to the reader, was long retained by the Saxons, who, even in their outward attire, were very long before they would adopt the fashions of the Normans. It was the common habit of civilians amongst that people, more or less costly, according to the material of which it was composed, and the ornaments and jewels by which it was enriched.

The wearer was a Saxon youth of more than ordinary pretensions; but not in fortune, for he was poor, the fatherless son of a degraded thane, degraded because he had taken part in some public matter against the Norman rulers of the land. But Cædmon the fatherless (for so was this youth called) had merit more than sufficient to counterbalance the hardships of his fortune. He had distinguished himself so much at the Saxon school, in the sciences as well as in the languages there taught, that he was a favourite with the Lord Abbot, who promoted him not only to the honour of wielding a pen, of writing and illuminating manuscripts in the Scriptorium, but to that of

being his own secretary, minstrel, and page: for in all the great monasteries of the period, the sons of the noblest born among the novices or scholars were usually selected as pages of the abbot.

In his person Cædmon was graceful. His countenance open, frank, and manly. His complexion retained its natural fairness, for as he had been closely kept to the pursuits of the scholar, he had not shared much in those exercises common to the youth of his time, though he dearly loved the sports of the field whenever he could on any rare occasion be permitted to indulge in them. Cædmon had the large blue eye and the light yellow hair for which the Saxons were celebrated; and that eye could become brilliant and sparkling in moments of strong emotion; and when circumstances called forth the finer feelings of his heart, its expression was no less animated than tender.

"Benedicite," said the abbot, as Cædmon, bowing reverently, stood before him with a respectful air, holding in his hands a bundle of newly-written parchments. "Optatus advenis," continued the abbot. "Quid libellorum est in manibus?"

"Lectionem in linguam vernaculam translaturus sum," replied Cædmon.

"Ego te in ingenii palæstram et arenam inducam," said the abbot.

"Nullum ego tribunal recuso," answered Cædmon, modestly, but without hesitation; and the abbot accordingly proceeded to put to his favourite sundry questions respecting the studies and scholarship of the class; with which some of our readers, notwithstanding the universal education of these days, would be very little edified, did we follow it up in the monkish Latin dialogue in which the discussion was carried on; now and then mixed with the *Lingua Franca* of the period, and even with good old Saxon, a tongue with which our abbot was well acquainted.

During the twelfth century, the subtleties of the Aristotelian logic were a most favourite study. But the Abbot of Tavistock, like John of Salisbury and Alan de Lisle, liked not that abuse

of the cultivation of the reasoning powers which had become a perfect mania in many of the then existing schools. Indeed, sophistry and quibbling had risen to such a height, that as the clergy were in those days the clerks or lawyers of the country, the present ingenious gentlemen of the wig and gown may claim the canon lawyers of the twelfth century as the originators of the nicest arts of subtlety and evasion.

. To return to our abbot.

"And what hath the logician taught in the schools to-day, Cædmon?" he continued; "somewhat more, I trow, of that close and abstruse method, to which I am no friend."

"The subject of to-day's inquiry, most holy father," replied Cædmon, "proposed by Radulphus for discussion, was the substantial form of sounds. There was a very hot debate between him and father Albertus on this matter; that Albertus, I mean, who is come to teach the singing novices counterpoint in the song school."

"And how like you, Cædmon, the subtleties of these teachers?"

"All such studies appear to me cold, when compared to the divine arts of poetry and music," replied the Saxon youth; "it is when I sing to my harp the poetry which has been inspired in my thoughts by the sight of nature, that I can forget all the griefs of this world: then do I seem to soar above them on a spirit's wing. I never look on the face of nature, at the morning or the evening hour, but my soul is on fire to sing her praise." Cædmon's eye dilated and flashed, as, with spirits raised to enthusiasm by youth and the love of song, he thus gave utterance to his feelings.

The abbot saw this, and said in a tone of friendly admonition—"My son, forget not in this ardent love for the gentle craft of the minstrel, that poetry is but as the gems or ornaments of human knowledge; while solid learning and moral philosophy are as her garments for summer and winter use, no less serviceable in the genial days of prosperity, than comfortable and sustaining in those of adversity. Cultivate ethics, therefore,

my son, second only in excellence to the study of the canon law, and that of obedience to the Church, which is obedience to God, for we may never forget—*Veritas à quocunque dicitur, à Deo est.*”

The abbot was here interrupted by the blast of a horn. Thrice it rang through the old walls of the monastery.

“Go to the tower, at the end of the dortor,” said the abbot, addressing Cædmon, “and tell me who it is that comes. That horn had a blast that might be heard to the very summit of the hills.”

Cædmon obeyed and soon returned.

“It is the archdeacon and his train who come, may it please you, my lord,” said the Saxon. “He bears the banner of the bishop, my lord of Exeter.”

“Ha!” exclaimed the abbot, “from Exeter, and to our house! We hold our monastery exempt. What can make this man so bold to come hither with his state? Had he come to our poor abbey on his own account, he should have been welcome; but we admit not the authority of the diocesan here, and, therefore, we will not yield to it. Cædmon, dost thou know this man?”

“No, my lord, I know him only by repute, but men speak fairly of him, and say he is one who investigates with honesty, truth, and justice.”

“It shall not serve him to look into our concerns, Cædmon,” said the abbot. “You say you do not know him. I will teach you what he is;—a wily subtle Norman, one who took part with the late king against Thomas-à-Becket, a supporter of the constitutions of Clarendon, giving to laymen the power of administering the laws in the punishment of offences committed by the clergy. Such a yielding of the spiritual to the temporal power was not to be endured, for the honour or the independence of the Church. Becket suffered exile, misery, strife,—yea, death! rather than yield the point; and here stands one, though of the Church’s humblest servants, who would be as bold,—one who, if he may not emulate Becket in greater things, would, at least,

follow in his steps in the courage to suffer as he suffered, to die as he died, for the independence of his office and of his monastery. By the holy bones of St. Thomas, I feel my spirit mount to a yet stronger resolution, when I do but name his martyrdom. Cædmon !”

“My lord.”

“We will meet this archdeacon ; we will entertain him with all courtesy, but we will confer with him in no place save the chapter. We will have no private tutoring here, no proposals for our ear in the locutory, with another manner of argument for us in the assembly of our brethren.”

“You will not meet the archdeacon then, holy father, till you do so in the chapter ?” said Cædmon.

“I said not so,” replied the abbot ; “he shall have all hospitable greeting ; our house must not be wanting in its duty to a wayfarer ; but we will have no private conference with this man, this Alberic the Norman, once of the abbey of Le Bec. Well do we know him,—a very subtle man, of whom it may be said, as Sallust said of Catiline, *cujuslibet rei simulator atque dissimulator*, we will not trust him. He the bishop’s eye ! he a searcher after truth ! why, I tell thee, Cædmon, he is but the tool of men in power—a very chameleon ; for whatever colour the bishop may take, that doth he become on the instant. Every bishop of Exeter is with him the perfection of man and churchman ; and the last ever the best.”

“Will you, my lord, be pleased to feast him in the guest-chamber, or in the refectory ? I must give notice of your pleasure to the cellarer.”

“Oh ! in the refectory,” replied the abbot. “Our investigator after rule shall see that we keep rule. And hark thee, Cædmon, who lectures to-day at the refecton ?”

“I do, my lord.”

“Well, then, do thou give us that piece, Cædmon, which thou hast penned for the history of our abbey, the foundation of the house by Orgar : the archdeacon shall see we lack not scholars here. And, hark thee, charge the cellarer to be

punctual in the performance of his duty on ourself; we will not abate an atom of our privileges. Let him suffer no one to sit till we are seated; let him give but half a sextary of wine to any brother who asks for beverage at dinner; and bid the cup-bearers be ready to attend on their abbot at the table: we may not slight ceremony towards our person as superior of this house, at a time when there are those who would pass on us an authority that we deny. Go, therefore, Cædmon, look diligently after these matters, and bid the vestiarius attend upon us in our chamber. We will change these garments for robes of more state. Yet, Cædmon, these are but outward things: we should robe ourself rather in the mantle of righteousness and of humility, and trust the rest to heaven, for all these indignities may but be aimed at us for our spiritual good, since they are among those changes and variations of fortune that wean holy men from the world. Yet this archdeacon,—it were good for his soul's sake to humble his pride! He visit here to look after our abbey!—our rule!—but I will be patient.”

Having thus vented his spleen against the unfortunate archdeacon, Abbot Baldwin went to prepare for his reception, which he intended to make as tedious by ceremonies as he could possibly render it. In the mean time we must retrograde a little, and state some matters that occurred at the abbey just before the archdeacon reached its gates.

## CHAPTER IV.

The garden was by measuring  
Right even and square in compassing.  
It was as long as it was large,  
Of fruit had every tree his charge.  
There were, and that wote I full well,  
Of pomegranettes a full great dele.

\* \* \* \* \*

These trees were set, that I devise,  
One from another in assise  
Five fadome or sixe, I trow so,  
But they were high, and great also,  
And for to keepen out well the sunne,  
The croppes were so thicke irunne,  
That every braunche in other knitte,  
And full of green leaves sitte,  
That sunne might there none descend,  
Lest the tender grasses shend.

*The Romaunt of the Rose.*

TRUST not two things, says the old proverb—a calm sea and a woman's curiosity. We apprehend that, good girl as Grace Bolt really was, it would have been more prudent in the cellarer, when he dismissed her, instead of receiving her assurances only to leave the abbey by the postern door, had he fairly seen her off the premises himself; for it so chanced that, not very far from the postern in question, by following the path under the wall, a private way was to be found which led direct into my Lord Abbot's garden.

Grace had not been in it since she was a little child, when the late abbot would sometimes take her there himself, and



leading her by the hand, would walk up and down one of the shady alleys of the holly and the sycamore, and would listen to her prattle.

What now possessed her, and under circumstances so pressing, to think of peeping into the garden, we cannot say, as we are not sufficiently masters of the philosophy of the human mind to be able to account for all the freaks that will often excite the fancy and overrule the will of a pretty, petted, and spoilt girl of eighteen. Perhaps the idea of visiting the spot was at this moment simply suggested to her by seeing the little private door which led to it standing most invitingly open, and no one within sight. The garden being more especially the abbot's, the cellarer had never allowed her to trespass within its bounds, now that she had become old enough to fall under the clause of prohibited goods at the monastery. And ever since she was forbidden she felt the strongest wish to see the place. Yet, recollecting the cellarer's admonition on the subject, it was not without a struggle between her curiosity and her conscience that Grace now resolved to satisfy at once her idle fancy by entering the forbidden ground.

No sooner had she done so, and passed within its first bounds, than she kept close in the long walk, under the abbey walls, for greater security. The walk was thickly set, on the wall side, with a clothing of ivy, and on the other by a tall row of sycamores, planted very nigh to each other. This long avenue, for such it was, extended as far as the last of the stew-ponds, which lay at the end of the wall. By peeping between the boles of the trees, Grace saw the gay flower-beds, the fruits, the Gothic pleasure-house, and all the delights of my Lord Abbot's garden, and more especially was she struck with the grand appearance of the old stone cross that stood in the very centre, and the pond, and the old willow drooping its branches into the waters, about which she had heard tell the wildest tale of superstition.

On these, and many more such things, did Grace now look with eager and wondering eyes. She would have liked very well to have helped herself to a little fruit, for though the

cellarer was bountiful to her in this respect, there is always something indescribably sweet to the young in picking for themselves. But she would not venture out of the shade of the trees, for fear of being seen from the monastery windows. At length, satisfied with gazing, she thought of making her retreat, when a pretty little bird that flew down from its nest among the ivy, attracted her eye. It was a robin. It came so near Grace, now with its stiff and straight legs hopping on before her, then just rising and flitting aside to a bush or bough, then again brushing its wing on the ground, and still on the flutter, and still seeming to invite her onward, that she, girl-like, followed, in the hope to see where the nest might be. But ere she could discover the retreat, what was her dismay on perceiving through the trees, the sub-prior, Sir Simon, the curate of the parish, and the cellarer himself coming towards the long walk in which she had hoped to be concealed. She stayed to see no more, but with the foot of a fawn ran in all haste to the postern. But what again was her consternation on finding the door locked! She knew not where to go, till recollecting she had observed the door of the still-house to be open (the still-house was a tower situated in the boundary wall by the Tavy side without, and flanked within by the long walk of the garden), she resolved there to seek shelter, in the forlorn hope that she might not be detected. She reached it in safety, ascended at once the outside steps, and got into the upper apartment, a place very seldom visited except by the monks, who there distilled their medicines and sweet waters before breakfast, for every Benedictine abbey had a school for medicine within its walls. In this apartment there were two narrow windows; Grace went to that which overlooked the river in the direction of the old stone bridge.

The miller's maid peeped cautiously through the lattice, where her eyes were speedily gratified with a sight that all the town, men, women, and children, seemed to be running out to witness—the progress of the archdeacon. It was evident that he was engaged on some mission from the bishop, as he came

in state. She saw the whole procession, but she liked it not so well as the sights she had seen at the octaves of Easter, at the fairs, and rustic sports of May-day.

First came a knight and two esquires, each armed and mounted, and followed by six archers in their short tunics and steel caps, for there were too many bands of outlaws and thieves at this period in England to make the roads safe for a journey of any distance without a guard. Then came a mounted priest bearing a banner, on which was embroidered a mitre, and beneath a crosier crossed by a key of gold. After the banner-bearer, came another ecclesiastic, also mounted, and carrying aloft a cross. Then followed the archdeacon himself, well hooded and furred, and seated on a palfrey whose housings were plain and without embroidery, for he was a man of no pomp in his equipage, beyond what might be absolutely necessary for the occasion on which he moved. He was attended by his chaplains and train, each man being attired in a black frock and white scapulary, and each having his head well protected with a thick furred hood. The progress was closed by six more archers and a wagon, for there being no good monastery on the road between Exeter and Tavistock, the archdeacon had travelled with all necessities and comforts about him. He had also a couple of pack-horses and a sumpter-mule; the former carried his mail-trunks, and the latter the especial services of plate for his table, his breviaries, his chalices, and his priest's cope. On the top of the sumpter-mule, agreeably to the singular fashion of the time, sat an ape, dressed in scarlet and silver. All the animals of burthen had their heads gaily set off with ribbons and silver bells, and a stout mastiff was tethered to the back part of the wagon by a long chain.

Having seen the procession clear the bridge, Grace knew that in ten minutes it would be passing within the monastery's gates. Not doubting, therefore, the holy men she had espied in the garden were by this time gone forth to meet it, she once more ventured from her hiding-place, her intent being to steal round

the house and endeavour to gain speech with one of the scholars, to whom she knew she could with safety impart her trespass, and from whom she might seek aid for her deliverance. But in this plan she was also thwarted. No sooner had she reached the last of the tower steps, than she again caught sight of the three individuals who had before so much alarmed her. There was no time for consideration, for they were coming towards the very spot where she stood; only the boughs of a large old tree, that drooped over her head, at this moment concealed her. As her last chance, she now, therefore, slipped into the lower or ground floor of the still-house, and hid herself behind its half-open door.

But cross purposes, like misfortunes, never come alone. How it happened we cannot exactly tell; but just as the sub-prior was answering some remark of Sir Simon the curate, they all three walked up to the still-house.

"Never tell me," quoth the sub-prior, "of the archdeacon coming to look after the keeping of rule within our house. Why, there is no house of Benedictines within the realm where stricter order is taken with all within its walls. Canonical rule never forgotten; Lauds, Prime, and Tierce, always sung. Not a fast neglected; no capons and fat swans allowed in Lent. No want of rods and disciplines, as the precentor can witness, who makes his regular supply of the new, as the boys make a bonfire of the old, the week before Ash-Wednesday. No want of hair-shirts here: no babbling at compline. After that hour, our silence, Sir Simon, is so absolute, that it would be difficult to say if some of our brethren were dozing or meditating on holy things; and then, for the sanctity of the brotherhood, they will not even endanger their eyes, far less their thoughts. We admit no temptations here. Fly the devil is our rule; and so, not so much as even the petticoat of a woman is admitted within our walls; save by my Lord Abbot, who sees ladies of estate in the locutory; or poor old women at the alms-gate or in the cloisters. No, no, Sir Curate, we admit no women here; for did we find one within these walls, knowing she could never come unless

it were by gramery, and for evil intents, we should immediately seize upon her, scourge her for a wanton, make her stand in a white sheet for a harlot, and, maybe, burn her for a witch."

Grace Bolt, who stood behind the half-opened door, trembling, fearing, panting like a hunted hare, on hearing these threats proceed from the mouth of the sub-prior, and knowing that in another instant she should be detected, in her panic rushed from the tower, threw herself on her knees at the feet of the cellarer, and begged Brother Thomas, for Our Lady's sake, to save her, to bear witness to her innocence, that she was no harlot, no witch, that she might not be burnt alive; and speaking as well as she could between her sobs, that she had only slipt in at the window of his cell, by his own invitation, on that blessed morning, and entirely to please him. Here Grace stopped in her voluntary confession, not for want of matter, but for want of breath.

How shall we describe the scene that followed—the astonishment of the sub-prior, the rage of the curate (for Grace Bolt was one of his parish and of his own flock), and the utter surprise and dismay of the cellarer? Had there been no one present but the sub-prior, the cellarer would not have cared a rush for the matter. For had the sub-prior thought proper to be a little angry on the occasion, he must soon have been reconciled to the cellarer, on the same excellent principle that makes Peachem and Lockitt friends in the Beggar's Opera; namely, because the one could hang the other, did it come to a matter of detection. But the curate of the parish, Sir Simon, was present, and that altogether altered the nature of the case.

Sir Simon, like most of his brothers among the secular clergy, looked with a jealous eye, from out his poor manse, on the comforts and enjoyments of the monks in their more costly abbey; and delighted to have a hole to pick in their coats, and to detect any one of their frailties, in order that he might chuckle over it as he sat at laymen's boards, and did what a single man could do to fight a thousand, for in number the monks of Tavistock Abbey were no less strong. To have him

present, therefore, to witness this shame, was not to be thought of by the worthy sub-prior with any degree of patience; and yet, not wishing to run the risk of offending and irritating the feelings of the cellarer, he felt that he had a very nice part to play at such a crisis. He paused a moment, therefore, to consider how to proceed. But not a little was the sub-prior's embarrassment increased, when he looked on the curate, and beheld the strange commotion that seemed to war within his breast.

Sir Simon's large goggle eyes appeared to flame up with passion, like a couple of torches or lighted brands; his lips quivered, his chest heaved, he pressed his teeth together as if to keep in the rage that was ready to fly out, like the hot steam of a boiling cauldron. At length he stammered forth in a voice sharpened to the keenest pitch of bitterness—"You Thomas the cellarer, you have drawn astray one of my flock; you have been the wolf to steal into my fold; you have robbed me of my choicest lamb; you have outraged all my feelings; that is, I mean, my feelings for holy Mother Church; for I am here in right of her cure, and all the souls and bodies in the parish are given to me. And to me shall you answer for one lamb that is led astray. The bishop himself shall hear of this; I will prefer my complaint against you to the archdeacon; I will make you stand to your account; will you or nil you, you shall answer it."

"I am answerable to none but my Lord Abbot," said the cellarer stoutly; "and I have done no ill. Speak! Grace, speak, what harm has come to you for being in my cell this morning; what did I give you when you came there?"

"Cherries and apples," sobbed out Grace Bolt, not daring to move from her kneeling position.

"Apples!" echoed Sir Simon; "apples! Holy Mary protect us! the very temptation of Eve, the very wile of the serpent! To tempt a silly girl like that with apples! and then to cry, no harm done!"

"Brother, brother," said the sub-prior, in a conciliatory voice,

"let me pray you not to make a brawl of this matter: for though you, Sir Simon, are secular and we conventual, yet we are both men of Holy Church; and therefore would I counsel peace, forbearance, and brotherly love."

"There hath been too much of it, I fear, for a sister," said Sir Simon, with a sneer; "I marvel you so excuse him."

"I excuse him not," replied the sub-prior; "mistake me not, good Sir Simon, I only pity him: truly apprehending that this after all may arise from a snare of the enemy. We know how potent he can be. He may have whispered to our brother here, that apples were innocent things. We do not say they are so; holy St. Bennet forbid we should call that innocent which lost our first parents Paradise. But the cellarer hath done her no wrong."

"I know not that," said Sir Simon. "To entice her thither, I hold to be as foul an act as was the sin of King David, when he laid a snare for the undoing of Bathsheba, as he looked upon her from the house-top."

The cellarer held up his hands in wonder, as well he might, at the hearing of such a charge.

"Nay, Sir Simon, nay," said the sub-prior, "there you go too far. Such a charge cannot be made within reason. Not that we would altogether excuse Thomas the cellarer, though we do in some measure excuse him, always supposing he has acted under the delusion of the enemy; therefore I, being sub-prior, and not choosing to trouble the Lord Abbot in this matter, do herewith enjoin a penance on him for the breaking of rule, which shall be sufficient for his repentance and amendment. Brother Thomas, I recommend you to sing this day before you sleep, the Seven Penitential Psalms; and furthermore to humble your human pride, which may have had some influence over your will to induce this lapse of rule, I recommend you, as an act of degradation and penance, to assist this day in the hospitaler—by receiving the newly-arrived guests, and drawing off their boots and socks, to ease them after their journey, and putting on their feet the taleaparia. And should any further or voluntary

motion of penance occur to your own mind, you can, good brother, call in at the confessional, after compline, and confer with me respecting the same."

Grace Bolt being twitted by Brother Thomas for speaking before she was spoken to, and, by so doing, making a great coil about a little matter ; receiving also a moderate scolding from the sub-prior for the present, and the promise of one far more severe by-and-by from Sir Simon himself, was finally dismissed, and hurried off as privately as could be, not only from the garden of my Lord Abbot, but from the abbey's bounds to its outmost wall.



## CHAPTER V.

Love it is an hateful peace,  
A free acquittance without release,  
And through the fret full of falseheed,  
A sikernesse all set in drede  
In herte is a despairing hope,  
And full of hope, it is wanhope.

\* \* \* \* \*

For none is of so mokell prise,  
Ne no man founden so wise,  
Ne none so high of parage,  
Ne no man found of witte so sage,  
No man so hardie ne so wight,  
Ne no man of so mokell might,  
None so fulfilled of bountie,  
That he with love may daunted be;  
All the world holdeth this say,  
Love maketh all to gone misway.

*Romaunt of the Rose.*

WHEN Sir Simon, the curate, quitted the monastery, he was too much heated with the fumes of anger and jealousy to be capable of cool reflection. The offence, therefore, of the cellarer, in respect to Grace Bolt, appeared before his imagination in the most false and exaggerated colours. But thinking the detection of the girl herself gave him an advantage over her hitherto obdurate spirit, which he had long desired to possess, he determined not to lose the occasion, but to go forthwith to the dwelling of Grace, in the somewhat contradictory characters of an amorous suitor, and an offended pastor looking after the welfare of the strayed but still precious lamb of his flock.

Now let not the reader be shocked at this assertion, for Sir Simon meant no harm to Grace; for "all he did, he did in honour," with a little policy to boot the more readily to help the work. The truth is, he had long looked towards her with an eye of affection, and purposed making her his own in an honest way, by making her his wife.

In order to explain this to our readers, we must first tell them, that the marriage of the English secular clergy had long been connived at by the Church, and it was not till some years after the date of our narrative that the custom was altogether, as a crying sin, rooted out of the land.

In the early part of the twelfth century, during the archbishopric of Anselm, the severest canons had been made in the councils of Westminster against the marriage of the clergy. But these were so indifferently observed, that others of a yet more severe nature were enacted, whereby all priests were enjoined to put away their wives, and never after to see or speak with them, except on occasions of great necessity, in the presence of two or more witnesses. These laws, however, being found insufficient to prevent the supposed offence, the Church turned her fury principally against the women, as the weaker party concerned in the crime, and therefore the more easily to be subdued; consequently any woman who should be induced to commit the offence of marrying a secular priest, became subject to punishment as an adulteress; no difference was made, no mitigation. But feelings of natural affection were stronger than all the canons instituted for their suppression, and the clergy continued to marry; so that at last the Church, despairing by her own authority of preventing the evil, insisted on the king's putting in force the laws against it. The monarch, however, who was expected to enforce these severe penalties (Henry the Second), was, perhaps, too conscious of his own frailties in respect to the weaker sex, to feel much interest in the matter of their chastisement. And not liking, maybe, to be too hard upon those whom God had joined together in matrimony, if holy or unholy, and at the same time not altogether

wishing to be at cross purposes with the Church, he went exactly half-way between both parties; and thinking that a good sum paid down would satisfy canonical justice, and put the loves of husbands to the test (as all priests were at liberty to put away their wives if they did not choose to pay for them), he contented himself with laying a round sum on the head of every ecclesiastic who had a wife; a tax which instantly made her, in every sense of the word, a very dear thing. And as Richard of the Lion Heart, the successor of Henry, who by every possible exaction oppressed his subjects to supply his necessities for the Holy Wars, privately winked at the custom, any priest, in his time, who, on what was called inquisition, could pay a good sum into the exchequer of amercements and fines, was allowed to keep his spouse without fear of molestation.

We deemed it right to say this much in regard to the marriages of the secular clergy, in justice to Sir Simon, that his reputation might be cleared from all suspicion, and that he might stand forth in the eyes of our reader, even as he did in his own, as a most worthy and meritorious suitor of Grace Bolt of the mill, being instigated to undertake his suit by that most powerful of all passions—love. Love, which, like a fire, shows neither sense nor respect in its rage, seeing it sends forth its flames hither and thither, enters the palaces of kings and nobles, and the cottages of villagers and serfs, without distinction, and when once bent on a destructive course, consumes where it had once only comforted and cherished, and never stops in its career till pride is laid low in the dust; and will, when seemingly extinct, frequently send up a flame from its ashes, and linger amongst the very destruction and ruin it has made.

At a time when the clergy were by far the most educated class of the community, when many of them were really learned as men, and accomplished as gentlemen, Sir Simon was, if brought into contact with such of his cloth, very like a wild man that had been caught in the woods amongst the bands of outlaws and half savage persons who then infested England. He was altogether unacquainted with the customs of the higher

orders of society in his day ; so that the Abbot of Tavistock, and many others, looked upon him as a churl, entitled to a certain degree of toleration only on account of his cloth. He was, it was said, of true Danish breed, with the blood of a great Saxon grandfather intermixed ; yet he deemed himself pure Norman, because it was the fashion of the time so to be, or so to appear.

Sir Simon had a head of hair fiery red ; a little nose that looked as if only half-formed by nature, who had been disturbed whilst originally squeezing it into shape ; a large mouth, and, though full and goggled, deep-sunk eyes, overshadowed by a pair of shaggy eyebrows. These peculiarities of feature altogether presented a countenance so singular, so strange, and so wild, that many on first sight of it did not know if it were most calculated to make them laugh or to make them fear. This face, so oddly put together in one of nature's freaks, could, in moments of irritation, become convulsed with passion. It looked in such moments like a wild cat of the mountains more than anything else ; for to compare it to a tiger would be by far too dignified a comparison.

Yet for all this, the face of Sir Simon could smile and look tender upon Grace Bolt ; and he was proud to display before her what, as a country lass, he fancied she liked best to see, —how strong he was, and how he could have broken the heads of all the cudgel-players in the ring with ease, had he not been a priest. And as nature seldom works by halves, to a form herculean in limb, muscle, and brawn, she had added a voice not unworthy being found in combination with proportions of such strength and power.

With parts and qualifications, personal and otherwise, such as we have described, it was not to be supposed Sir Simon could be so unthankful as not to be sensible of their merits. Indeed, so far was he, good man, from being dissatisfied with his abilities, that he rather, than otherwise, over-estimated them. For he thought there was no person in all the wide world like himself, so richly gifted by nature, so favoured by

heaven, that he was quite sure, happen what would in any matter, he never could be in the wrong. His temper was naturally so sweet, that he was always in excellent humour when he had his own way. And so far was he from yielding from weakness or modesty, or mistrust of his own reason, that on all occasions of opposition he was as blind as passion could make him; and very malicious where he thought there was nothing to fear.

Such was the very excellent person, who out of pure love to Grace Bolt, had made up his mind to put up with all the scoffs and scorns of the more rigid among both clergy and laity, and to pay the tax into the bargain for becoming a married priest. He had settled the whole thing in his own mind, and somehow or other he never doubted hers. Yet, as for Grace, though she could frolic with her playmates, the village lads and lasses on the green, and dearly loved the cellarer, who had petted her ever since she was a child, she thought no more of Sir Simon than she did of my Lord Abbot; but respected him as being the priest of her parish, and that was all. She would often sit and wonder in respectful silence, as he talked what she could not understand, which he frequently did, when he called in at her father's mill to take a cup of ale, and enjoy a gossip; to which Sir Simon at all times opened his ears as widely as any old woman in the parish could do.

But as love is never deficient in imagination, Sir Simon was not wanting in this particular; and moreover not being at all mistrustful of his own powers to please, he had most ingeniously construed the silence of Grace into an understood consent to his addresses, and never doubted (as she now and then would stare with her full round eyes upon him, when lost in wonder at the more abstruse parts of his conversation) but that on all such occasions she was riveted in admiration of his most rare and eloquent discourse. Not till within the last two or three days, when he called repeatedly at the mill, did it ever enter into his besotted head to doubt

his visits were other than agreeable. But somehow or other, self-satisfied and self-deceived as he was, he nevertheless remarked that in the latter visits, when he spoke some soft things in her ear, Grace turned away from him with a cross and pettish air, and looked as if she did not like it.

These indications of gathering clouds in that atmosphere of love with which the curate's imagination had surrounded his fair one, puzzled his shallow wits; he could by no means account for them; since, having satisfied himself he ought to be loved, he did not doubt but that he was so. When, therefore, the incidents of the day at the abbey came to light, the cellarer's attention in the matter of the apples, the stroll into the abbot's garden, etc., Sir Simon could no longer forbear suspecting that the cellarer had become his rival, and that Grace was as fickle as she was fair.

To satisfy all doubt, however, he determined to seek his charmer; but some provoking circumstance or other had intervened all the day long, so that he could not find himself at liberty to execute his purpose till after curfew. In fact, it was so late that the miller had gone to bed, and so had the miller's knave; and Grace was about to betake herself to rest, when she heard a growling from the watch-dog, stationed in the small court before the mill. She knew the gates were locked, and that, as a wall of some height surrounded the premises, no one could enter. She therefore never troubled herself about the matter, but took the brass bodkin out of her hair, shook her long unbound tresses over her shoulders, and proceeded to pass a comb through them, ere she made any further preparations for going to rest.

The unfortunate Sir Simon, like a vessel impelled forward by the steam from her boilers within, had hurried on, scarcely feeling the ground beneath his feet, till he arrived at the well-known gates of the abbey mill; forgetful alike of the hour, and of the curfew bell, which had long since tolled; forgetful of the darkness and the difficulties of the way, and seeing only by the flambeau of jealousy, that cast its own unnatural glare

on every object on which he looked, giving a colouring of its own to all things within and without his impassioned mind. In this bewilderment Sir Simon never once thought of the gates being shut.

But what are locked gates to that power which is proverbially said to laugh at locks and the smiths who made them? "Very poor is the love," thought Sir Simon, "that cannot get over a wall." And, in this tempest of the passions, thought and action being with him one and the same thing, up he sprang, gained the top of the wall, and slid down on the other side, never heeding the slight accident of leaving a part of his gown behind him.

In the courtyard there was no one at hand but the great dog, and the great dog growled; but Sir Simon, familiarly calling him by his name, to which the dog's nicety of recognition gave no denial, the trusty guard very complacently wagged his tail, remained perfectly quiet, and let Sir Simon pass on undisturbed.

Grace had carelessly left the door on the latch, and as her father was a vassal of the Lord Abbot, she frequently broke the law about the curfew with impunity, for she had even now, after the legal hour, kept a light burning within the dwelling at the mill; so that, when Sir Simon walked in without ceremony, she could at a glance discern the discomposure of his dress, his face, and his eyes staring wider than they ever stared before; he looked wild, disordered, almost beside himself with the mingled emotions of jealousy and love. On seeing Grace, Sir Simon exclaimed—

"Oh, Grace! what have you done with me?"

"What have I done with you?" re-echoed the astonished maid of the mill, shaking back her hair, and parting it from before her face with both hands. "Oh, Sir Simon! what have you done with yourself? You, a priest, to be coming here at this time of the night! I will call up father."

"I do not want to see your father; it is you, Grace, who must hear me, or I'm a dead man before the morning. You have dealt with me cruelly; you false, deceitful woman;" and

then, adding a trope, like one from his own sermons on idolatry, he said, "you have cast down the virgin image of the purest love from its shrine, and have there raised a wanton image instead for your idolatry."

Grace, quite incapable of comprehending such a flight of nonsense as this, but hearing the words virgin image and shrine, and something about casting them down, she very naturally concluded that she was accused by Sir Simon of the sin of an Iconoclast (though she would not have comprehended it by that hard name), and so, wringing her hands and blessing herself, at the hearing of so false a charge, she called on all the saints above to bear her witness that she never did such a wickedness in all her life; that she never saw an image of the Holy Virgin without kneeling to it, nor a picture of her without kissing it; and regularly set up two candles before her altar on her own day, ever since she was a little child; and furthermore, she told him that she scorned his false words, and would appeal to the Lord Abbot, whose vassal she was, to protect her.

Sir Simon now accused himself of talking to the wench in a way she could not understand, and of wasting his tropes and figures on ignorant ears, though they belonged to the pretty head of Grace Bolt; but so angered was she, that it was long ere he could make her comprehend his meaning. At length he succeeded, and once more pleaded his love with all the ardour of the passion. He told her he would make her his wife, and that he meant to pay the tax for her dear sake.

"But I don't want you to pay it," said Grace, very bluntly; "you are not to my mind; I had rather see the back than the face of thee, any day, at our mill."

"This to me, young wench! to me, your lawful pastor!" said Sir Simon with a haughty air, for her bluntness and scorn had roused in him a sense of offended pride, and now spoke the superior, the lover giving place for a moment to the priest. "Do you know, Grace," he continued, with a solemn air, "do you know what are the judgments of heaven against those who treat its ministers with contempt or scorn?"



"Alack!" exclaimed Grace, beginning to fear that she had gone too far in offending a priest; but not feeling respect enough for Sir Simon to be able to force out a tear of repentance, she made wise to do so, as the good folk say in Devonshire, and she now very demurely wiped her eyes with the corner of her volupure.

Sir Simon, seeing her contrition, thought he had produced the desired effect, and that he had done enough for his own dignity. So wishing to blend awe and love together, as the most likely means of governing the female heart, he once more became tender, and tried to soften the flinty bosom of the maid of the mill. Long did he plead, but to all his impassioned expressions did she remain silent, looking down with shamefacedness, and playing with the corner of her volupure, as a modern and fashionable beauty would with the end of her scarf, when listening to a declaration of love to which her heart has no inclination, but for which her self-interest has something to plead.

At length Sir Simon got to protesting what he would and would not do for her sweet sake, would she but listen to him. He would get half the parish to send their corn to be ground at her father's mill. He would give her a new blue court-pie guarded with silver, as fine as that of the reeve's daughter. She should hear minstrels and turgitors, as if she were a baron's lady; she should see the apes and the dancing dogs just come from France, that Queen Berengaria herself had seen and laughed at till the tears ran out of both her eyes for mirth.

To all these tempting, and not very canonical offers, Grace turned a deaf ear. Sir Simon then proceeded to tell her he would go a love pilgrimage for her dear sake; and we may here observe that love pilgrimages were at their very acme in the twelfth century. "Oh, Grace!" he continued, "there are few things but I could submit to them for thy dear love, so I might but win it in the end. I see and hear thee in everything. In the very bells that summon me to my duty, I seem to hear but the clapper of thy father's mill. If I look on the white fleecy cloud, as it sails above in the sky, I think straight upon

thee, as I have seen thee among the flour-sacks, whitened all over with their dust. All other women seem but as bran in comparison with thee. Now, Grace, dost thou understand me? How I love thee, my very pearl of miller's daughters! the wassail bread, as I may say, in a banquet of delights!"

Here Sir Simon was again getting poetical. He stopped, however, in the midst of his flight, and once more came down to homely prose, saying very roundly: "Grace Bolt, can you love me?"

To so direct a question the maid of the mill gave as direct an answer, and that was, "No."

"Not love me, Grace!" exclaimed Sir Simon in amazement, "how can that be? Perhaps you have not seen sufficient of me yet."

"I have seen thee at father's mill every day since Candlemas last," she replied; "and if that is not seeing enough of thee, tell me what is."

"Yes, Grace, but thy father, or thy old grandmother, or thy aunt, have been present, and such company has been an impediment to the endearment of lovers. Now, if you would but consent to let me sit by your side, or walk alone with you every day, for a few hours, Grace, you would love me at the end of the year."

But what was his wrath when, instead of being moved to pity, Grace, unable any longer to keep her countenance, burst into a fit of laughter.

With Sir Simon, however, it was no laughing matter; or if he laughed for a moment, it was like an hyena, that laughs before he flies at a gazelle which bounds across his path. He tried to speak collectedly, but his sentences were short, and broken with the bitterness of his passion. His countenance became fierce, his eyes wild, and he almost grinned in his fury, as he said—"Insolent woman, you shall rue this!—I can hate as well as love; and possibly a little better. Harken to me: I suspect you and the cellarer,—suspect you both: there are laws for such offenders. There are appeals to be made, in-

formations to be given, judgments to be passed, and punishments to be inflicted——”

“The cellarer is as honest a man as ever breathed,” said Grace Bolt boldly.

“Curse him!” cried Sir Simon, in his jealous passion, forgetting he was a priest; “name him not to me; you are a lost woman. You do not know what I can do; I can be dangerous, and that you may find to your cost.”

Grace would have spoken to mitigate his fury, but he would not let her.

“I will not suffer you to condemn yourself,” he said; “I will give you time to consider this matter. I love you, fool that I am to stoop so much beneath me. I love you in spite of myself. Thou must—thou shalt be mine. I will give thee till eight o’clock to-morrow morning to think on my proposal: then, Grace, declare thyself; then are we friends or foes, and for ever. To love or to hate, do thou choose. If thou wilt love me, I will adore; if thou wilt hate, I will revenge.”

So saying, without staying to hear a word in reply, with a violence of manner and of gesture which indicated frenzy, did Sir Simon quit the miller’s maid, and left her to settle her resolution as she best could with her own stout heart.

1

## CHAPTER VI.

You are meek, and humble mouthed ;  
You sign your place and calling in full seeming,  
With meekness and humility : but your heart  
Is cramm'd with arrogancy, spleen, and pride.  
You have, by fortune, and his highness' favours,  
Gone slightly o'er low steps, and now are mounted  
Where powers are your retainers ; and your words,  
Domestics to you, serve your will, as 't please  
Yourself pronounce their office ; I must tell you,  
You tender more your person's honour than  
Your high profession spiritual.

SHAKSPEARE.

THE chapter-house of Tavistock Abbey, of a more recent date than many other parts of the edifice, was circular within ; of a light, lofty, and graceful style of architecture, which, together with the pointed arch, was first introduced into England at the time of the Crusades. There were in this chapter thirty-six stalls, wrought of stone, within the walls, overarched, and decorated with the richest carvings. In the centre arose one slender reeded pillar, which, branching from the top into regular arches, formed a vaulted roof of the greatest beauty. In form and elegance this tall and shafted column, with its sprouting branches above, might be compared to the palm-tree of the East.

The windows were in the pointed style, very narrow, and filled with small diamond squares of plain glass, that admitted unobstructed the light of day. But these colder

portions were surrounded by a border of rich stained glass, and on the top of each window appeared, in the same glowing materials, the arms of the patrons and benefactors of the house.

It was in this beautiful apartment that Abbot Baldwin, on the morning after his arrival, prepared to meet the archdeacon, in the full ceremonial of his order. The abbot was attired in his alb, robe, and cope, with gloves richly jewelled on the back of the hands; his ring of espousal to the Church on his finger; his cross of precious stones depending from his neck, and his low and peculiarly formed mitre on his brows.\*

With great dignity of aspect and demeanour, did Abbot Baldwin now advance to take his seat. He was preceded by his cross-bearer, and a chaplain, who bore, likewise, his crosier before him. The crosier was in the ancient form; it resembled a warrior's mace. The train of his robe was borne by Cædmon, the Saxon page. His arms were crossed upon his breast, his head rather raised: and as all the brothers assembled and rose at his presence, he acknowledged their courtesy by slightly bowing till he reached the steps of an elevated stall, which stood alone on the eastern side of the circle, facing the entrance.

After a moment's pause, he again bowed and took his seat. Then all present followed his example; and the prior and sub-prior both advanced, knelt, and kissed their superior's hand; this homage paid, they returned to their seats; and the abbot said, with solemnity, "The souls of all deceased brethren and of all believers rest in peace." To which the monks in chapter responded, "Amen."

"Benedicite," continued the abbot; "and now let us to the business of the day."

\* The mitre of an abbot differed from that of a bishop, or mitred abbot; the latter being allowed to sit in the parliament amongst the peers spiritual. As the Abbot of Tavistock did not receive the privilege of taking his seat amongst these till the reign of Henry the Eighth, Abbot Baldwin could only wear the common mitre.

No sooner were these forms ended, than, at a given signal the doors of the chapter were again opened, and the archdeacon and his train were seen standing without. There was a bustle, a stir, something like a contest. The abbot soon perceived that his own cross-bearer, who had retreated after conducting his superior to his stall, was among the throng, and was, in fact, the individual principally engaged in a warm debate with the cross-bearer of the archdeacon, who now attempted to enter the chapter with the same ceremonial as had before been observed on the entrance of the abbot. The words, "Not here—not to be suffered here," were heard above all the murmurs of the voices in the crowd. "Not here. My Lord Abbot is in chapter. None may advance into his presence with a cross borne before him, while he sits here in council, in his own monastery, unless he be a cardinal who comes with the authority of His Holiness the Pope."

"It is my Lord of Exeter, who visits in the person of his archdeacon," said the cross-bearer of the latter, as, with a fierce look, he attempted to pass forward, in no very gracious manner. "Know your duty, and give way to the power of the bishop."

"No such power passes here," said the officer of the abbot, and lowering his cross, and using it like a halbert, he barred the entrance in a way so as to render the passage of his rival impossible. "You come not here with the raised cross of Exeter: this abbey is exempt."

The dispute was likely to be warm between the officials. Abbot Baldwin kept his seat whilst it was carried on with the most unmoved demeanour, till the archdeacon, seeing no possible means of making his entry but by violently dislodging the opposing cross-bearer from the station he had assumed (where, if the truth must be told, he held his sacred emblem as a bar to the way, with as little respect as, in our days, the keeper of a turnpike would bar the road with the gate closed, till a dispute about the toll might be settled), bade his own cross-bearer stand back. On this the other instantly raised

his symbol of abbatial authority, and let the proxy of the bishop pass forward, followed only by his train of chaplains and clerks.

"My Lord Abbot," he said, as he addressed Baldwin with a look of defiance and a bow of respect, "this is not well. Did I come hither as Alberic, sometime a simple monk of Abbey Le Bec—did I approach barefooted, with a discipline in one hand and the penitential rule in the other, and so crawled to your feet to beg a benison, it would not be too humble for me in my own person: but mean though I may be in myself, not so am I in my office. I come hither, Abbot Baldwin, in the name of my Lord Bishop of Exeter, your diocesan, to whom you owe obedience; I come on a visitation respecting the rule of that house over which you bear sway. In showing disrespect to me in this mission, you show it to my Lord of Exeter; and to him, therefore, will I make my appeal."

"We hold ourself and our house exempt from his authority," said Baldwin; "but, inasmuch as it respects our own honour that we should receive with all courtesy whatever matter my Lord of Exeter would propound to us, we will not deny you the audience you require. Speak freely, reverend archdeacon; we will hear the bishop in your person as a suitor, though not as a master; and therefore is it that his lordship's cross could not, in this chapter, be borne before his archdeacon."

"Proud abbot," said Alberic, "this assumption will not pass. Your house is not exempt; it is amenable to the power of the bishop, and that it is so you may be made sensible to your shame hereafter. There are many grievous charges that my lord hath against you, of which I here present you the written schedule in this scroll. You are accused, as abbot, with having your own private seal, with which you have signed away certain lands appertaining to this abbey, for your own profit, and to the grievous injury of the house."

"It is a false charge," answered Baldwin; "I have not so done. I did but sign away a part and parcel of land that the old Lord De Dunsford coveted, as it adjoined his own. I made

it over to him for the wisest purpose, that it should return to the abbey with a tenfold interest, even with the estate to which it thus became annexed, at its owner's death. A wise thrift was such a gift, I trow ; else had the old Lord De Dunsford's nephew claimed the estate as his heritage, and so it would have been lost to the Church ; for the young man cares not for cowl or mass. He would not give a mark to have a mass said, or a bell rung, for a dead uncle's soul. But now will the old Lord De Dunsford enjoy our small parcel of ground whilst he lives, have the benefit of our prayers when he is dead, and we of all his lands. What other charge have you against us, for we would fain have the scroll opened to its utmost limits ?" added the speaker in a tone of scorn.

"My Lord of Exeter charges you with having taken upon you to interfere in affairs of an episcopal nature. You have granted sundry licenses for wedlock within prohibited degrees of kindred ; as in a case of marriage between cousins of the sixth remove. You have enjoined a public penance on the wife of a secular priest—a matter clearly beyond your power. And you have also taken upon you to grant letters of indulgence for the erection of certain chapels and cells within the diocese, without warrant of my Lord Bishop."

"To charges such as these," said the abbot, "I have but one answer. The times are not those of such easy manage, that we may let them run their own accustomed course, and either do, or delay to do, till the exact forms and ceremonies of every matter may be observed. These are times of extreme necessities, and such must be met by extreme measures, often above rule, though not contrary to it. Is it contrary to rule when a house like ours is called upon to furnish such store of arms, of steeds, and sums in gold, for these wars in the East, that, rather than oppress our poor vassals to raise them, we make the rich furnish them, by sale of licenses and indulgences granted at their own suit, for which they pay nobly ? And shall we not put to open shame a woman who has become the wife of a secular priest ! because it is shrewdly suspected that



the Lord Bishop of Exeter is disposed to view such offences with too great lenity, and therefore lets go by the offenders? We will suffer no such practices within the bounds of our own domain."

"But you suffer some that are worse," said the archdeacon. "I came to your town but yester even, and this morning have I received information of a charge most solemnly preferred against one of your house, for conduct that I should blush to name. The secular priest here, Sir Simon, the curate, charges one Thomas, a monk and cellarer of this abbey, with having, contrary to rule, and at the suggestion of the great enemy of mankind, admitted to private conference, and that, too, within his own cell, a woman, the daughter of your miller! The sub-prior, Sir Simon also accuses of being a party to the transaction, having full knowledge of the fact."

The abbot looked round with astonishment. "How!" said he to the sub-prior, "what charge is this? Send for the cellarer; call him hither. This matter is one which it becomes our authority to correct. In good sooth it were a scandal to our abbey to let such go unchastised."

The sub-prior, who had his own reasons for not being at all over-anxious that he should be made an accusing party against the cellarer, would, had it been possible, have stolen out of the chapter to prepare Brother Thomas for his defence; but such an escape was not admissible, and a chaplain was forthwith despatched to summon the accused.

With no inconsiderable feeling of alarm, the cellarer drew near the seat of judgment; heard the charge, and would have flatly denied it, had not the sub-prior been called upon to bear witness to the fact, by Sir Simon himself. Finding, therefore, that to tell the truth was the least dangerous course in such a strait, the cellarer most heroically determined at once to speak it. As he was mustering up courage to begin, Sir Simon, who had accompanied the archdeacon to the chapter, stood forward with wrath imprinted on every line of his face, for the hard-heartedness of Grace, who had finally denied his suit, had

converted all his tender flames into those of hatred and revenge; he now, therefore, charged the cellarer with his offences to his teeth.

In reply, Brother Thomas stated, that he had known Grace Bolt ever since she was born; and having been accustomed to play with her from her childhood, she still appeared as a child to him: he was very fond of little children, and having also an earnest wish to talk to Grace, for the good of her own soul, about the vanity of her dress and some other follies, he admitted that he had sometimes given her a ghostly lecture in his own cell.

"Enough," said the abbot, "enough; the cellarer confesses his offence. What says the sub-prior?"

"My Lord Abbot," he answered, "I do not deny that I caught the maid in question concealed in one of the towers of your lordship's private gardens."

The archdeacon gave a start, raised his hands, shrugged his shoulders, brightened up, half smiled, and then shook his head.

But the abbot was not a whit humbled; with the most unmoved air he merely said: "In my garden! Who dared to conduct her thither?"

"The foul fiend, doubtless," replied the sub-prior; "the fiend who ever tempts woman to do that which she is forbidden, and who, by awakening in this silly wench an idle spirit of curiosity, as she has confessed, led her, after quitting Brother Thomas's cell, into the Lord Abbot's garden."

"This may be true, but it cannot exculpate the cellarer," said the abbot; "wherefore should the damsel come to his cell?"

The cellarer could but protest what he had before protested, his innocence of all offence in the matter; but this satisfied no one. The archdeacon looked with an air of triumph as he unrolled his scroll of offences against the Abbey of Tavistock, and pointing with his finger to each item, shrugged his shoulders, and talked apart to his own chaplains whilst they listened with that air of grave attention as if they were a jury called upon

to deliberate before a verdict was passed on the evidence of the case. The brothers were uneasy in their stalls; some rose, many gathered into knots, as their voices were heard in subdued murmurs, and by the echoes of the vaulted roof produced a buzzing sound, like a chorus of bees in a hive.

The cellarer wiped his brow in the heat that had been produced in him by perturbation of mind. Sir Simon, the curate, grew vehement in his exclamations for punishment on the offender. The sub-prior seemed to be in utter despair of making any impression in favour of the culprit; when, with an air of dignity, the abbot at length arose, waved his hand to indicate his wish to speak, and this he did thrice ere anything like order could be restored. Silence, however, once more prevailed in the chapter; and scarcely had the word ordeal passed the superior's lips, when the whole assembly, as with one voice, exclaimed, "The ordeal! the ordeal! let the cellarer have the benefit of the ordeal."

"Of red-hot iron," said Sir Simon, coming up to him on the right hand.

"Of boiling water," said the archdeacon, advancing towards him on the left.

"Of hot pitch or molten lead," said the precentor, as he also drew near the condemned.

"Or of cold water by immersion," said a chaplain hard at hand.

During these several nominations of ordeal, from which, according to canonical rule, the cellarer was at liberty to make his own selection, he stood between the proposing parties, looking first at one speaker, then at another, with a most dismal countenance, his head turning from side to side as if it moved on a pivot, eager to catch at any word that might be spoken likely to propose a mitigation of the cruel sentences from which he had to choose. But as neither hot iron, molten pitch, boiling or cold water were at all of a nature to suit his taste, or his skin, which being smooth and sleek with good cheer, was none of the hardest, he was sorely puzzled which to choose. He would at once have

named the cold water had he been able to swim, but he doubted his power of floating, and he had not, perhaps, altogether that confidence in his own innocence which, considering his perfect integrity of purpose respecting Grace Bolt, and the supposed unerring correctness of ordeals, he ought to have felt at such a crisis. He now gave a rueful look of appeal to the sub-prior, as much as to say, "Can you do nothing to help me out of this dilemma?"

The look of appeal being made to no unfriendly person, was answered by the sub-prior saying, with much gravity: "Brother Thomas may prefer the solemn ordeal of bread and cheese. How say you, brother, will you venture on the ordeal of bread and cheese?"

"Most willingly," replied the cellarer, with alacrity; "that is an ordeal allowed only to holy men: it becomes, therefore, a test spiritual.\* I do at once decide for the ordeal of bread and cheese."

"Had you not better take time to consider of it, Brother Thomas?" said the abbot; "you may prefer a more impressive ordeal—the red-hot iron balls, or boiling water."

"By no means," replied the cellarer. "I never was skilful at handling a ball in all my life, hot or cold, I ever let it slip through my fingers. And as for boiling water, I never could abide it; it vexes too much the spirit within me, for I, being a man of peace, like not to be put into hot water, which so unpleasantly brings to mind the discord of this vain world."

"The boiling pitch, molten lead, or cold water, are equally at your discretion," said Father Alberic.

"Many thanks, most worthy archdeacon," replied the cellarer; "but my discretion leads not to any one of them. Boiling pitch and molten lead are ordeals more especially belonging to the Stannary Courts, where they pour them down the throats of miners and Jews, who are suspected of foul play with the purity of our tin. And as for the cold water it is in

\* The ordeal of bread and cheese was allowed only to monks and friars.

nowise decorous, seeing it is an ordeal fit only for old wives suspected of witchcraft. No, most worthy archdeacon, I, a poor monk of the rule of St. Bennet, am for none of these. I have no ambition in ordeal, none that might make me eminent in story. Therefore will the ordeal of bread and cheese be quite honourable enough for such a poor simple man as I am ; and for none other will I give my voice."

"Be it so, then," said Abbot Baldwin ; "it is one in accord with conventual rule."

"And quite orthodox," said the sub-prior ; "and there are many sorts of cheese to choose from."

Without further ceremony, the cellarer made his exit ; and having the consent of his superior for what he did, nothing out of heart, and being no less strong in body than in innocence, he walked direct to the kitchen, selected therefrom one of the creamiest and choicest of my Lord Abbot's particular store of cheeses, smiled till his full round cheeks lifted their muscles so high as almost to close his small twinkling eyes, so great was his inward satisfaction, and thus retreated with the future ordeal of heaven's justice to his own snug cell.

## CHAPTER VII.

I'll read you matter deep and dangerous,  
As full of peril, and advent'rous spirit,  
As to o'erwalk a current roaring loud,  
On the unsteadfast footing of a spear.

SHAKSPEARE.

WE return to the chapter, to find my Lord Abbot and the archdeacon carrying on a stormy debate, far more in character with the quarrels of the turbulent barons of the period, than with the settlement of a Church question. Every eye was fixed upon the speakers.

"You refuse then," said the archdeacon, "to answer my Lord of Exeter touching these matters in charge against you."

"I deny the power of the bishop altogether within this house," replied the abbot; "I acknowledge no authority but that of Rome."

"Your house has no claim to exemption by any bull or charter," said the archdeacon; "consequently you are amenable to Exeter. Therefore, in the name of the Most Reverend the Lord Bishop of the diocese, do I summon you, Baldwin, Abbot of Tavistock, to appear at Exeter, before my Lord Bishop, in chapter there assembled, on or before the day of the assumption of our Blessed Lady, the Mother of God, to answer for the facts herewith charged against you, on pain of being subject to the utmost penalties of body and soul that my Lord Bishop may please to enforce against you, even to the penalty of excom-

munication, if you persist in this contumacy towards his episcopal rule."

Baldwin rose in haste, snatched his abbot's staff from the hand of the chaplain to whom he had committed it, advanced some paces towards the archdeacon, raised his head, and with an impassioned look of offended pride, confronted him, holding forth his staff, as he delivered the following address, with an energy of manner, a resolution of purpose, and a dignity of demeanour, that were altogether most impressive: "I will give no reply to this summons, save that which I have already given, that where there is no authority to summon, there can be no duty to obey."

"This," said the archdeacon angrily, "this refusal is more than an offence to the bishop; it is an insult to the king, by whose gracious pleasure the bishop received his investiture; and who willed that my Lord of Exeter should have power over all monasteries within this diocese of the West."

"A temporal prince," replied Abbot Baldwin, "can have no authority to will or to do within the pale of the Church."

"But bethink you," said the archdeacon, "that the king you thus openly defy, is Richard, the glory of chivalry, the beloved son of Holy Church. O Jerusalem! Richard is thy champion!—the liberator to whom thou lookest with hope amid thy tears; and yet here is one, and he, too, a Christian and a priest, who would treat with contempt the authority of such a prince."

"It is false!" exclaimed Baldwin, irritated by the turn the archdeacon had given to his words: "I said not so; I spoke but of Richard as a temporal prince, having no power over persons spiritual, who are amenable but to God in heaven, and to His Holiness on earth. When I stand here in vindication of my own independent right, did Richard come, armed with the chivalry of Palestine, with all his honours, like a star of that East whence they had derived their lustre, glittering on his crest, I would not fear him. Armed with no fleshly sword, but with my abbot's staff, I would remember Becket; how he met Henry face to face, and hurled

upon him, and all who took part with him, the thunders of the Church. Even so would I defy Richard, did he raise but a finger of authority against me, Baldwin, as abbot of this house. Even so do I defy the power of Exeter, now before me in thy person : and here, in the presence of this chapter, I make my appeal to Rome."

At these words, the superior drew from his bosom a written parchment, sealed with his own seal, and making a sign to the monk who was one of the assembly, he approached, knelt, and kissed the hand of the abbot, as he received from him the appeal to the Pope. At the sight of a reference made to a power so august, all the chapter rose and bowed in token of respect.

"I have herewith declared my purpose in chapter," said the abbot ; "I shall without delay dispatch my chaplains and messengers to Rome. Say as much to your bishop. Say I have made my appeal of exemption from all episcopal jurisdiction ; even as did the abbots of Battle and of St. Albans, on a like account, to Pope Adrian of blessed memory."

"Proud abbot," said the archdeacon, "is this a time, when the good King Richard, who after his defence of the Holy Sepulchre, has fallen into such a strait as to be prisoner to his worst enemy,—when England is torn asunder by manifold foes, by miseries numberless, till, like a mother against whom rise her own children, she bleeds from every vein in the wounds of civil strife ;—is such a time as this one for Churchmen to quarrel, and for pride to gain the mastery ? It is not well, casting all authority aside, I tell you, as brother to brother in one calling and one faith, that in the garment of the Church you have made a grievous rent."

"I see," he continued, "all the misery that will result from this contest with my Lord of Exeter. Would I could mediate. Be not too certain ; remember, the shaft does not always fix in the mark to which the eye directs it. Be ruled in time : let me mediate between you. Blessed are the peace-makers. Consider the peace of the Church !"



"I must not on that account sacrifice the freedom of this abbey," replied Baldwin. "I shall abide by my appeal."

"Farewell, then," said the archdeacon. "I will take my leave, praying that the decision of His Holiness may quiet these angry jars. And though I will not do other than part from you in peace, yet my duty to my Lord of Exeter demands that, as I pass your threshold, I shake off the dust of your rebellious house from my feet."

"Such may be your duty to your bishop," said Abbot Baldwin; "but it suits not with the hospitality of our abbey that you go hence with an unbroken fast. You shall not depart our gates till you have partaken of our refecton. It is near the hour. In the interval, let me pray you, most venerable archdeacon, to rest awhile in the guest-hall, where we will speedily join you. For this chapter, we here dissolve it: the brothers may depart."

The formalities and ceremonies of breaking up the chapter were speedily concluded. The archdeacon with his train retired to the guest-chamber, the monks dispersed. Abbot Baldwin remained alone.

He drew forth his book of fine ivory leaves, made his notes with the utmost deliberation, and was about to retire, when he thought he heard some one stir behind him. He looked round and perceived a small door, which led to a long gallery from the abbot's apartments, move. It was opened, and a figure issued from beneath the low arch, somewhat unusual in such a place; a man equipped in the armour of a knight. He was clad in a coat of chain mail, to the long and close sleeves of which were attached gloves, also of linked steel, that covered his hands to the fingers' ends; they were as flexible as if made of leather. Indeed, from the smallness of the rings of which the chain armour of the twelfth century was composed, it was in no way an impediment to the action of the limbs; whilst, from its high polish, it reflected the light on every movement of the body, as water reflects the gleams of the sun at every undulation of the wave. His

legs and feet also were completely covered by this close-fitting mail. On his head was a flat-crowned steel cap, to which was attached that part of the armour called the gorget, protecting the throat and chin: to this cap in time of battle, was affixed a piece of armour to guard the face, formed of iron bars in front, through which the wearer could see and breathe, called the aventaille.\* The surcoat of this warlike figure (of crimson silk richly embroidered, but stained and worn) was girt round the middle by a leathern belt, fastened in front by a buckle of gold. On his left side he wore a sword, the blade of which was straight, and the handle in the form of a cross. A small and richly inlaid dagger hung in his girdle.

This armed figure, whose sudden appearance surprised Abbot Baldwin, was tall and stately; the warrior dress he wore was calculated to give dignity to his appearance, even had nature done her work in a manner less striking; but she had formed it in one of her noblest moulds. His countenance was youthful, manly, and commanding. The upper part of the forehead and the lower of the chin were hidden; as the small square aperture left by the cap for the face allowed only the more prominent features, and the upper lip, to be seen. The eyes, dark and penetrating, had in them a glance that indicated an impatient and haughty spirit. The expression of the whole countenance was, at this moment, perturbed.

As Abbot Baldwin uttered an exclamation of surprise and impatience at the interruption, the armed figure replied, "Do you not know me? Can a mailed coat and a cap of steel thus alter a man that his friend need ask his name?"

He approached nearer: Baldwin started. "Holy Mary!" he exclaimed, "Henry de Pomeroy! Can it be?—impossible! He is even now with the Earl of Mortaigne."†

\* The aventaille was first brought into use by the Crusaders during the Holy War in Syria.

† John, afterwards King of England, during the life of Richard the First was called Earl of Mortaigne.

"He was with the Earl of Mortaigne," replied the stranger, "but he is no longer so; he is a fugitive, like the hart that flies before the hunters and the hounds. Henry de Pomeroy now stands before you, a defeated man!"

"And the Earl of Mortaigne?" said the abbot, with an eagerness that scarcely allowed him to draw breath. "What of him,—is his cause lost?"

"Not so, I trust," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "not lost, though the bark of his fortunes is fast driving towards the rocks. The Earl of Mortaigne seized the castle of Windsor. Philippe of France, in secret, aided him with money and men-at-arms. I joined him. We might have defied all assaults, had the Baron de St. Lo kept faith with us. But he came not, as he had pledged his word to do, to man the castle with a sufficient force. In the meanwhile certain friends and adherents of the captive Richard besieged the Earl at Windsor. We held out till the fear of famine compelled us to yield. At this juncture, our envoy, in returning from Philippe, being taken prisoner betrayed certain letters to the victorious friends of the king. By these they learnt the truth; and without pause denounced the Earl a traitor to his brother Richard: for hitherto John had made some matters of quarrel between these bold barons a pretext for seizing the castle. But all was now changed: all who had proclaimed themselves his partisans were dealt with by the severest measures. Many were even hanged by these proud barons. I escaped with the prince, who is now gone to Nottingham, there to join his power; and hither am I come to bear these tidings of mischance to his friends in the West."

"Does your purpose end thus?" inquired the abbot, with a peculiar tone and air.

"No," said Henry de Pomeroy; "it has a larger aim. I come to rouse the friends of the Earl of Mortaigne, both in Devon and in Cornwall; to raise men and means; and once more to hold ourselves prepared for the moment when John may seize the sceptre which his brother has so recklessly thrown

aside from his grasp. This is my purpose. I arrived but now ; and desirous to communicate these matters to you alone, I sought your Saxon page, and prayed him to guide me where I might gain speech with you in private after your chapter. I have now told you all. These are times that demand action. We must not slumber when the lion is about to be unchained."

"Never," exclaimed Baldwin, "never shall Richard again put his foot on English ground !"

"Truly you have no cause to love this crusading king," said Henry de Pomeroy ; "he has been no good friend to you."

"An ingrate !" exclaimed the abbot ; "he has been to me like the frozen viper, warmed in the bosom it requites with its sting."

"Did you not," inquired De Pomeroy, "offend the deceased King Henry by taking part with his rebellious son ? I have heard men report as much."

"The quarrel was unnatural," said the abbot. "I did but seek to shield him from his father's wrath. He loved me ; and then was I to Richard even as David was to Jonathan ; we two had but one heart. I toiled for him, served him, suffered for him ; and how, think you, requited he my pains ?"

"By making you, by his influence, abbot of this house ; was it not so ?"

"It was. But was that, I trow, a fitting requital to me ?—to me, who looked to be Primate of all England ! But I was passed over, and another Baldwin chosen in my stead.\* No more of it ; let us talk of other matters. I have here a list " (he drew forth a scroll as he spoke) "of those who are thought to be friends to Prince John. These we must secure. Men and means must be found ; the stout castles of the West must be ours ; and then shall we be ready to meet all occasions of necessity. We heard that, previous to this last contest, you and Prince John had a hot battle with the friends of Richard."

\* Baldwin, Archbishop of Canterbury, who died at Tolemais during the Crusades.

"It was with William de Stuteville, who led on the power of the Archbishop of York," said Henry de Pomeroy. "The contest was brief, but fierce."

"Where was the Earl of Mortaigne?" inquired the abbot; "was he in the battle?"

"He was in its very heart," replied Henry de Pomeroy. "John, with his falchion in his hand, that day made his passage through all opposition. The prince brought with him victory. At one part of the field where all seemed lost, with but the waving of his pennon he turned the fortunes of the battle."

"He is a brave prince," said the abbot; "he shall want no aid that we can give him. Have you the letters that I sent to you at Berry Pomeroy Castle, ere you ventured on this business?"

"I have," replied Henry. "I have thought upon their contents; their counsel to me seems good and wise. You say she is heiress to her dead father's lands in Normandy and England; that a kinswoman purchased the wardship of her from the king. This is well—but is she fair and young? and——"

"She is fair as the lily drooping on its bed," answered the abbot. "She were worthy to become a prince's bride. I know well her guardian, who keeps the fair Adela more like a votress in a cell, than as an heiress inhabiting her own castle. Yet will I contrive that you shall meet; for I have much influence with the Lady Alicia; and when once known to her fair charge, the Lord of Berry Pomeroy need not fear a denial to his suit!"

"I will not fear it," said the youthful warrior; "and trust me, Father Abbot, if I win her by your aid, I will not be ungrateful. I have influence with the Earl of Mortaigne. Once place the crown on John's head, and your own shall soon bear its augmented honours, as a mitred abbot among our peers!"

"And Exeter, that proud bishop, shall no longer insult our

power," said Baldwin, "by asserting any right of rule over this house. But I must leave you, for even now does his archdeacon wait for me in the guest-chamber. There join us. But you must first seek Cædmon; bid the Saxon page conduct you to a chamber near my own. There disarm; attire you in a less warlike habit; these mailed trappings might excite some curiosity at such a time. There are abundance of tunics and gowns in the wardrobes of my chamber. I will despatch Cædmon to the Lady Alicia, to request permission to bring with me a noble friend to hunt upon her lands. Her young charge delights to witness such sports. This hunting will surely lead the way to your becoming known to her. We shall meet in the refectory—till then, farewell!"

So spake the abbot ere he retired from the chapter-house; Henry de Pomeroy lost no time in obeying his directions, and went forthwith to seek the page who had already privately admitted him.

## CHAPTER VIII.

Great chere made our hoste everich one,  
And to the supper set us anone;  
And served us with vitaille of the beste;  
Strong was the wine, and wel to drinke us leste.

CHAUCER.

THE hostrey, or guest-hall of the abbey, was a noble chamber; on each side were seen a row of pillars supporting the arches of the carved oak ceiling. The furniture was costly; it had been chosen by the present abbot, who, in whatever appertained to his person or his dwelling, was splendid and sumptuous. The richest hangings decorated the walls; and the tapers that at night were burnt in this apartment, in sconces of silver, were perfumed with ambergris and cloves.

It was here that the archdeacon, his train, and Henry de Pomeroy, were waiting a summons to the refectory. The latter had changed his military for a civil habit, and wore a rich dalmatic of Genoese crimson silk over a tunic of green; its ample folds were bound round the middle by a rich belt; and as he advanced with a graceful step into the room, the drapery of his long purple robe showed on his tall and stately person to the greatest advantage. The robe was embroidered with silver stars, and fastened on the left shoulder with a fibula, or brooch, of emeralds and gold. His boots were short and furred; and round his head he wore a chaplet, or circle of pearls, that confined the hair, which, according to the fashion of the time

(a fashion so severely reprobated in the sermons of the clergy), was suffered to grow long, and fall flowing over the back.

It was in this chamber that the hosteler met the guests, and gave to each the Benedicite and the kiss of peace. Soon after he conducted them to the refectory, where the abbot intended to entertain the archdeacon with all the ceremonies and solemnities of his house. The refectory was a long and rather low chamber; short and massive columns supported the roof; it was but feebly lighted by the small round-headed windows of its primitive construction. A stone pulpit projected from the north side of the wall, where the reader appointed to lecture during the repast always took his station. At the east end, above the panelling of oak, was seen a large and rude picture representing the Crucifixion. Within the doorway, on the left hand, was an almery, or poor-box; and there, also, stood the grace cup—so called on account of its being handed round to every monk, immediately after the grace, as the finishing draught of a meal. In some religious houses, where the superior was particularly indulgent, it was often long ere the rap of the prior's hammer upon the table called for the finishing goblet of the day.

We shall somewhat dwell on the customs of our ancient monasteries, because few of our general readers can have the opportunity of making themselves acquainted with them; and if those who chance to know more than we do of the subject, should find such notices impertinent, we can only recommend them to resort to the very common practice of skipping; when, a few pages passed over, they may follow the narrative in unbroken succession.

Baldwin entered the refectory bareheaded, his arms crossed upon his breast, with an air of modest dignity in his deportment, combined with the ease of one accustomed to high society, who is about to do the honours in his own house. He was attended by several of his chaplains, and four youths; two were pages of the *digitus*, the other two of the covered cup. As he entered, all present rose, and remained standing; till



after having first saluted the cross, the abbot proceeded to the *digitus* at the side table, where the pages whose duty it was ministered to him, whilst the prior poured from a silver ewer perfumed water into a basin of like material, and presented to him a napkin to dry his hands after the ceremony of ablution.

This done, he advanced to the head of his own separate table, to which he had invited the archdeacon and Sir Henry de Pomeroy. The prior and sub-prior presided at the long tables appropriated to the monks. On a signal being given, two of the singing chaplains advanced to the foot of the abbot's board, and sang the Latin grace. The grace was led off by a few notes struck by the precentor, on an instrument he held in his hand, and used as the moderns do the pitch-pipe in a country church. This instrument, called a *tabula*, was of bone, ornamented with gold and silver, in form not unlike the ancient lyre.

On the abbot's table were loaves of wassel bread, two of which only were allowed for use, the other four being allotted to the poor. There also stood the orthodox jug of single beer, and the modest half sextary of small wine. But these humble liquors, though strictly enjoined by rule for an abbot's table, were, like the hundred hobnails presented in our times to the Lord Mayor of London on the day of his inauguration, a mere ceremony of office, retained more for show than use.

The potations that flanked those of ceremony were as various as they were excellent. They consisted of clary, metheglin, piment, and vernage, a mixture of wine, honey, and spices, and the still richer hippocras. Two windows in the refectory opened from the great kitchen, and through these were served the meats, hot and hot, to the tables.

No sooner had the dishes appeared, than the officer, called the *particularius*, cut up the food into commons; an allotted portion for each monk; but to the novices and scholars were given a pittance, which was nothing more nor less than an allowance for two lads on one plate; a circumstance by no means favourable to the justice due to a growing boy's stomach,

if he happened to have in his fellow commoner\* a youth stouter, and more active in the play of the fingers than himself, with better grinders and a larger swallow.

The dishes now served were by no means indifferent ; for no monastery in the West could boast better cooks than our Abbey of Tavistock ; and though the fare was capital at all the tables, that served to my Lord Abbot's, for its variety and *recherché* character, might have figured in the carte of a modern Parisian restaurateur.

Yet we must here observe, that spiritual persons, according to strict canonical rule, were permitted to eat of no four-footed thing ; because God had cursed the beasts of the earth on the fall of Adam. Hence arose that most unrelenting war which the brothers of conventual rule never relaxed against ducks, geese, swans, and all manner of feathered fowl : till, at length, finding a larger variety of food was necessary for a large fraternity, and that many choice creatures, fat bucks for instance, ran on all fours, they got over the canonical scruple by introducing an indulgence on the plea of necessity ; so that, at the last, it came to this, that there was no necessity at all to observe the rule, except whenever they might be so disposed.

But we will not follow up this subject. We will not intrude on the province of Mrs. Glass ; though, as that celebrated book is said to be really the work of a bishop, we might plead even episcopal authority, were we disposed to give a chapter on ecclesiastical cookery.

Abbot Baldwin welcomed the archdeacon and his guests to his poor house, and bade all be seated at the conclusion of the grace. The refectiener rang a small handbell as the warning of what was called the charity ; namely, that each monk was on this day to have poured out to him a cup of hydromel at the commencement of his repast. The word was given, and now Cædmon, the reader of the day, ascended the stone pulpit and opened his book.

\* An ancient name for one who is accustomed to eat with another, from one trencher or plate, in convent or college.

Still he had to wait till silence should prevail ; for, at present, there was all the clatter and commotion attending a numerous body of men dining together in hall. And the servants and obedientaries were still running about, presenting to each brother a super tunic to save his frock and the nappery from the spoonfuls of soup and rich gravies which might be spilt in being carried from the plate to the mouth.

There is a solidity of purpose about Englishmen which makes them always intent over a good thing. Hence is it that, unlike their neighbours the French, they are no great chatters at dinner. But in the monasteries, as there were a good many services within the church, and silence was absolute after complin, they were more apt to talk at their meals than are in general the natives of these isles. Abbot Baldwin, however, found such a perpetual gossiping a great let to the reader (who sometimes read the learned abbot's own compositions), and it not a little annoyed him, and more especially when he had guests at his own table. In order, therefore, to give a check to their loquacity, he enjoined that, on all days of especial ceremony, the worthy brothers should be permitted to talk only in Latin ; a permission that put the curb upon their satirical jestings, their stories to provoke laughter, and their gossipings, as effectually as if they were under the severest penance in discourse.

At such seasons they were also enjoined to express their wants at dinner by the use of what was called the *signa necessaria*, which was a sort of shorthand talking with the fingers. Thus, on these peculiar days, if a monk needed some fish, he waved his hand like the tail of a fish in the water ; and if he wanted a slice of venison from my Lord Abbot's board, he was to hold up his two fingers, on either side his temples, to denote the horns of a deer. It was surprising to see how many brothers put forth this sign on venison days in the refectory.

Whilst the repast was proceeding, the chaplains, called the monitors, from their duty being to report to the abbot or prior

whatever they observed amiss, ranged from table to table, and gave a shrewd eye to the novices, pages, and scholars.

Before the reader commenced his task, the abbot, as a matter of courtesy, prepared to go through one of the highest ceremonials of the day, that of the covered cup. The youth who was the cupbearer ascended the daïs (or raised platform on which stood the superior's table), knelt before the abbot, gave the cover to his fellow page, and after reverently kissing his lord's hand, presented to him a goblet filled with the choicest wine. Baldwin took the richly chased and sparkling cup, and with an air of dignity, bowing as he named his guests, pledged the archdeacon and his friends. After this the cup was presented to each, with an air of profound respect, by the pages of the daïs.

All being seated, and all having tasted the cup, the business of dinner was seriously commenced ; whilst Cædmon read aloud from a curious history, which he had composed on the authority of the ancient chroniclers of the house : "A true and faithful Narration of the Foundation of the Abbey of Tavistock by Orgar, Earl or Heretoge of Devon ; and the curious events connected with the Court of that most noble Earl ; also, how the Abbey was burnt by the Danes, and built again only thirty years after its original construction."

Cædmon having gone through his reading, the abbot struck the table with the palm of his hand ; on which signal, a little page, son of a noble Norman, advanced and knelt on the step of the daïs, ready to fulfil his pleasure. It was to send a cup of wine to the reader. Cædmon descended from his pulpit to receive it ; the abbot again struck the table thrice to denote that dinner was ended and the grace might be sung. Once more did the precentor and the chaplains step forward to perform their duties.

The abbot now rose and pronounced the benediction. The spoon officer was already engaged in going round the tables and collecting the spoons, assisted by the cellarer ; and according to the rule, the former took especial care to hold my Lord Abbot's spoon in the right hand, and all the rest in the left.

In the midst of this bustle, and before the abbot and his guests had quitted the daïs, there was a stir at the end of the hall that arrested attention. The servant of the locutory came forward and announced that certain pilgrims were at the gates, demanding admission ; and that the janitor (who, according to rule, was to be a "wise old man") had left them standing without the wicket, till he should know his lord's pleasure, as it was past the hour for admitting strangers.

The abbot directed that they should be let in, and declared his intention to receive them himself. Previous to their entrance, however, the hosteler came to make his report. He said that some of the strangers were pilgrims of an ordinary sort ; they had been as poor sinners to the shrine of St. Thomas-à-Kent to look upon his cloven skull. He had ascertained this by observing that they wore round their necks the Canterbury bells, that jingled wherever they went ; and none but St. Thomas's pilgrims might put them on. Others were on their way to the blessed well of St. Maderne, in Cornwall ; and of one, who came alone, he knew nothing except that he had a gray beard, and must therefore be an old man. He was, to be sure, a palmer ; for he carried attached to his bourbon, or pilgrim's staff, the branch of a palm-tree. He had merely stated to the hosteler that he came hither on his return from the Holy Land, to offer his bourbon and scrip at the altar of the abbey church.

"He must be then originally of this parish," said the abbot. "Marshal him hither ; we would gladly hear the news from Palestine, and how matters stand in the Holy Land since the capture of our king."

There was something noble but sad in the expression of the palmer's countenance ; the features of which, though worn and altered by change of climate, and that still greater change, perhaps, produced by the passions of the soul, must in youth have been eminently handsome. And as at this period both clergy and laity had renounced the wearing of beards, they were seldom seen on the chins of any but very poor persons ; the

gray beard, therefore, of our palmer might serve not only to disguise him, but to indicate he was a man of very mean condition.

On being questioned, he admitted that he was a native of the parish of Tavistock, where he desired to offer up, and to redeem for a small sum, his bourbon and scrip, in gratitude for his safe return to the land of his birth. But on being asked his name, he replied simply: "Walter the Palmer."

"No other!" said the abbot, "for this can alone have been yours since you became a palmer."

"Walter of the Plant Wormwood, may it please you, then," said the palmer; "for by that name was I known till I gained the palm by visiting the tomb of our Lord."

At the date of our narrative it was common with persons going on pilgrimage, or to the Holy Land wars, to assume a *sobriquet*, or penitential name, as it was called, altogether suppressing their own. Motives of humility and repentance sometimes led to this, as a disguise to their rank and station, and sometimes it was a matter of convenience, if they were labouring under any circumstances that rendered a temporary obscurity desirable.\* But though these *sobriquets* were not uncommon, they were seldom assumed by poor people, who, having no rank or state from which any merit could be derived by its being laid aside for awhile, and who, being too insignificant and too obscure to be pursued by any enemy as far as the East, had no motive for disguise. That the palmer was poor might be inferred from his long beard, and the very coarse materials of which his dress was composed. The abbot's curiosity, therefore, was excited, and he still further pressed on the stranger to declare himself.

The palmer, without giving any answer, laid aside his staff,

\* Geoffrey of Anjou, the father of Henry the Second of England, on assuming the bourbon and the scrip, to go on one of these incognito expeditions, had taken, as his name of penitence, that of a lowly plant, the genista, or Plantagenet, or the broom; a devotional name stuck to his posterity, till it became a proper one, and was, afterwards affixed to the blood royal of England.

bared his right arm, and showed that he wore, soldered upon it, an iron ring of some weight. All present crossed themselves at the sight, in token of respect to the vow of penance which this ring indicated.

"I am under a vow, holy father," said the palmer. "Before the blessed sepulchre itself was I vowed never to reveal my name, my family, my degree, or the one great purpose for which I live and breathe; never to suffer this iron to be struck off this arm, till I have visited in deepest humility, and performed an enjoined penance, at every one of those holy places to which I have bound my soul in my secret vow. Thus much I am at liberty to speak. The visitations to which I am sworn will detain me for some time in the neighbourhood of this abbey, though I must have no fixed home. I must visit, ere I quit the West, the Mount of St. Michael, and one place more; after which, reverend father, I shall be at liberty to tell my name and lineage. But till such time comes, I rest me Walter of Wormwood, an unhappy man, vowed to penance for his sins; a poor but true servant of the Church. Having spoken these things concerning myself, I have nothing more to add."

"The Blessed Virgin forbid that we should do other than respect your vow, holy palmer," said the abbot; "yet we may, without infringing it, require of you the news from Palestine. We will order the consolatio\* in our own chamber. There we invite you, holy palmer, and as many of these guests as would rather partake with us, than with the brothers."

\* A private refreshment in the abbot's apartment.

## CHAPTER IX.

This rash, romantic war,  
Begot by hot-brained bigots and fomented  
By the intrigues of proud designing priests :  
All ages have their madness, this is ours.

LILLO.

SHALL we look at the group assembled in the abbot's private chamber? The picture it presents to our view is striking; it is worth a moment's pause.

There sits the abbot at the head of the board: he has exchanged his dress of state for one of private ease; his air and demeanour are less austere, more pleasing. This is the hour of domestic indulgence without ceremony. Yet even now, his stateliness of carriage being natural to him, cannot wholly be laid aside; and though his mind is in repose, yet is there something in the expression of those quiescent features, and in the glance of that haughty and penetrating eye, that seems to say that the passions which have left so strong an impress in their course do but slumber for a while, and are liable to be roused up on the slightest call of offended pride, to resume their empire with all their wonted force.

Near the abbot sits Sir Henry de Pomeroy; there is in him a luxuriousness of manly beauty in its bloom, mingled with a free and soldier-like air, that altogether would render the young and gallant knight a fit study for a painter who wished to portray an Antony after victory, in his hours of voluptuous



ease. His beautiful hair, with its long curled and perfumed locks, his fair forehead, and his looks of indolent enjoyment, being singularly contrasted with the general form and structure of his body and his limbs, which indicate strength and vigour of a more than ordinary kind.

In the finest possible relief, if we may be allowed so to express ourselves, to this luxuriousness of youthful beauty, is seen the palmer. He stands with his eyes intently fixed upon the young warrior, wrapped in the long and ample folds of his simple and coarse gown; his head, now bare, for he had taken off his pilgrim's hat, is of the most marked description. The countenance pale, the features regular, and though a good deal wrinkled about the eyes and brow, yet not other than handsome; whilst the long beard falling over the bosom, gives so venerable an air to the head, that he looks many years older than he really is.

The two or three other pilgrims who are present add to the picturesque character of the group, as they are all persons of a goodly form and mien; and Cædmon, the Saxon, the favourite page of the abbot, availing himself of his privilege to be near his lord's person, now sits on a low stool near his feet, and completes the picture.

"Will you take nothing but water, holy palmer?" said the abbot. "Take a cup of wine,—remember what says the apostle,—for thy stomach's sake. It will not, I trust, infringe upon thy vow to pledge me in this!" He filled one with hippocras, and handed it to the stranger.

"I may not misprize such courtesy," said the palmer. "By my vow I am bound to temperance, not to abstinence. Therefore, holy father, I may venture to pledge you in this fair cup, with thanks for the hospitality of your house. I have not tasted such a draught since I quaffed hippocras in the tents of our Crusaders, after we had become masters of Acre."

"You have served in these wars, then?" said the abbot; "and peradventure we ought to call you Sir Walter of the Plant Wormwood—a knight, maybe?"

"I said not so," replied the palmer. "My bracelet of iron must excuse my further answer."

"It must, indeed," said the abbot. "We spoke without thought of thy vow. But, believe us, we have no idle curiosity. Our arrow was but as the fool's bolt, cast at a venture from a bow drawn in idleness. We will ask but such questions as any man may answer,—the last tidings of King Richard. For such a captive as he of the lion's heart cannot be kept from the thoughts of his people, though he may from their eyes. Have you, in your journey hither, heard aught of him?"

"Nothing, but what has been often told," replied the palmer, "that John, Earl of Mortaigne, the unnatural brother of our brave Richard, in league with his enemies, and supported by the envious and malicious Philippe of France, conspire together to bribe the Emperor and the Duke of Austria still to detain captive the royal Richard, till his usurping brother may find occasion to seat himself in security upon England's throne. But heaven will not suffer that treacherous brother, that coward heart, to prevail!"

"The Earl of Mortaigne is no coward!" said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as he glanced his eye indignantly at the palmer. "And in my presence no man may call him so, without answering to me the foul scorn so cast upon his princely name."

"Peace! peace! my son," said the alarmed abbot, who feared Sir Henry's sudden passion might betray more than it would be safe to let out at this crisis. "Know you not, a palmer, and one having a vow, cannot underlay any man's challenge? To speak thus is, therefore, folly; and yonder good man's gray beard should be his warrant, so that an over-hasty word may receive a pardon without more ado."

"He shall ask it, then," said Sir Henry stubbornly; "he shall ask it. The prince is my friend."

"I am not his enemy," said the palmer: "I have nothing to do with the quarrels of princes. My vow dedicates my thoughts to heaven; and to heaven, therefore, can I alone pray to set at rest these unhappy feuds, and to restore peace, hope, charity,

brotherly love to England, from the princes of the royal blood down to the poorest of her people."

"Well, let us speak of Palestine," said the abbot, glad to turn the conversation from such dangerous ground. "What news thence?"

"News most sad," said the palmer: "the infidels, no longer in fear of the mighty Richard, break the truce every hour. Once more are our pilgrims interrupted, maltreated, robbed, murdered. Yet even do the very infidels, who thus profit by the captivity of Richard, deplore it, and blush that the brave king's companions in arms can let him lie imprisoned by one of their own Christian faith, and not rise to a man to free him. Their expedition must fall to ruin wanting his aid."

"No man denies Richard the praise of valour," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy. "He owes his courage to his English stock, but his pride to his own spirit; and that few men can brook."

The palmer fixed his inquiring eye on the young baron, as he said: "Whilst Richard was free, no man claiming knight-hood dared have spoken as much, unless he set his life at naught."

Henry de Pomeroy started up, laid his hand on his dagger, but recollecting himself, he dashed the half-drawn weapon back into its sheath, and calling himself petulantly a fool, to be thus angered by a gray-beard, sank down into his seat again in silence.

The abbot again endeavoured to direct the conversation to other subjects. He talked of Syria; of the holy sepulchre; the miraculous images and relics: and received such answers from the palmer as showed he had been an attentive observer.

"I have visited," said he, "that land of majestic memory. I have stood where holy men trod of old; where the princes of an ancient people rose, like its suns, matchless in splendour; princes of a favoured line, fearful in their spirit, glorious in their adoption, the chosen of God; mighty even in their shadows, in the memory of their long departed greatness.

That land where prophet arose after prophet, and with a voice, as of a trumpet in the wilderness, aroused a sleeping world, proclaiming to the nations the coming of their king."

The palmer looked upward as he spoke; an expression of awe was strongly imprinted on his face; and his voice became deep and emphatic as he dwelt on the wonders and the sacred character of those scenes, so surpassing all the ordinary experience of mankind.

Yet, in the midst of his enthusiasm, there was a degree of melancholy in the palmer, that seemed constantly to keep him in check; for after he had spoken with the utmost animation, he would sink into silence and abstraction, till he was again roused by some question he could not well avoid. But though so sad, there was nothing harsh or unpleasant in his manner. The palmer's was evidently the melancholy of a sensitive and a suffering heart, not of a discontented or disappointed spirit; hence was it gentle.

The abbot observed the spirit of gloom which seemed to steal over the party, and turning to his page who sat at his feet, said in a cheerful voice: "Cædmon, hast thou thy harp at hand? A shade of sorrow hangs on the brow of our holy palmer here; and you, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, the dark spirit seems to be with you also. Like Saul, you shall feel what a harp can do to cheer it. Our young David here shall try his skill." Cædmon took his harp; swept his hand lightly and rapidly over its chords; then, with great art, played a gentle air, and stole gradually into a flow of the softest and most melancholy music. Again he led into a less pensive strain, till, at length, he gave full scope to the instrument, and rang out such a glorious measure, with all the power of the harp, making its tones speak to the heart, and rousing those who listened to a feeling of life and energy, that the spirit of sadness which had before stolen on the social hour was at once put to flight, and all were cheered and animated by the skill of the Saxon minstrel.

The strain ended, the abbot filled the cups, and Sir Henry

de Pomeroy, now restored to his better humour, smiled as in a significant manner the superior gave the health of the fair Adela de Marmoutier, and success to the hunting match on the lands of her kinswoman, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont.

The palmer, who, after Cædmon had done playing, had sunk again into a reverie, on hearing the last sentence, seemed to be suddenly roused to attention. In a moment he bent his keen eye on the abbot and on Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as if he would penetrate their thoughts. The abbot, who was quite as observing as the palmer, remarked the interest he betrayed at the mention of the young and beautiful Adela. He asked if the holy man was known to her, or to her guardian the Lady Alicia.

"I was formerly of this county," said the palmer; "and know therefore that the Lady Alicia de Beaumont is the mistress of Wilsworthy Castle. But so many years have passed since I have seen my native place, that I did not know till this day she was still alive."

"Oh, yes!" said the abbot; "she has lived in the old castle, except when absent in Normandy, ever since the news came of her lord's death, that made her the richest widow of the west. The Lady Adela, her orphan niece and her ward—the wardship purchased of the king—is also the heiress of great wealth. Many seek her hand. But she has been strangely kept from the resort of nobles and gentlemen who would prefer their suit to her; whilst her aunt, the Lady Alicia, studies only how to fit her for a saint; and some think she will at last prevail with her fair charge to become a nun, and to bestow all her immense riches on the foundation of a religious house."

"Such would be a godly purpose," said the palmer.

"Yet one that would make all men sigh," said Sir Henry, "that so sweet a rose should be taken from the world, condemned to perpetual seclusion, and leave no branch of so fair a tree."

"It were a great pity it should be thus," said the abbot;

"but we have better hopes. It were a good deed to win this prize of love and beauty. Palmer, thou shalt drink a cup to wish the gallant De Pomeroy God-speed in his suit to the lovely Lady Adela."

"I may not taste another cup," said the palmer; "but I am in charity with Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and with all men, I trust; I will therefore wish that he may speed in every suit that shall be acceptable in the eye of God. And now, Father Abbot, I would crave your leave—for I am weary, and must depart hence at early morn—to pass from this chamber to my place of rest. Give me your benison, and suffer me to depart."

"Holy man," replied the abbot, "you have our leave, and our blessing. Cædmon!"

"My lord!"

"Summon hither the chamberlain, and bid him guide the palmer to his couch. The blessing of St. Rumon and Our Lady be upon your rest."

The palmer bowed and retired. As he passed on, he asked the chamberlain where Sir Henry de Pomeroy would be lodged. He was told in the chamber at the end of the gallery appropriated for strangers.

"And the archdeacon, where is he lodged?" inquired the palmer.

"In the chamber next to yours," replied the official.

"I am too much honoured for so poor a man," said the palmer; "the janitor's cell would have been good enough for me. I am not worthy to be lodged near so noble a Churchman."

## CHAPTER X.

O treach'rous night!  
Thou lend'st thy ready veil to every treason,  
And teeming mischiefs thrive beneath thy shade.  
HILL's *Zara*.  
With whisp'ring noise, as tho' the earth around me  
Did utter secret things!  
The distant river, too, bears to mine ear  
A dismal wailing. O mysterious night!  
Thou art not silent; many tongues hast thou.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

It was not till a late hour that the abbot and Sir Henry de Pomeroy retired to rest. When left to themselves, they had discussed with mutual energy those designs in which the subtle policy of Baldwin, from motives of personal ambition, and the fiery spirit and ill-directed friendship of Sir Henry de Pomeroy for Prince John, combined to play for so deep a stake. Yet, even with men so heedless of the ordinary routine of life, whilst bent on objects of such high aim, nature claimed her dues, and very weariness at last compelled them to seek repose. Soon after, all the house was still.

Nothing now was heard but the "many tongues" of night: the wind that whistled down the large old chimney; the rushing of the Tavy over its rocky bed; and, now and then, the baying of a dog, or the hooting of an owl amongst the towers and trees.

The palmer, though he had sunk on his pallet to rest, after devoutly telling his beads, had not extinguished his lamp;

indeed, he seemed in no mood for sleeping: his thoughts were active, and notwithstanding there had been on this evening a settled calm about his heart, it was more the calm which a long habit of self-control can call up at will, than that conquest of religion over feeling, that renders the mind incapable of being assailed by any of the ordinary occurrences of human life.

The youthful Sir Henry de Pomeroy had not, we fear, told his beads as regularly as the church of which he was a member would have required ere he slept. He had removed whatever might be cumbrous about his dress, wrapped himself in his long mantle, and without more preparation, warrior-like, had thrown himself on the couch intended for his repose. But not long had he slumbered when he was disturbed, and fancied, whilst in a dreamy state between sleeping and waking, that he heard something more than the moaning of the wind and the rush of the river, audible as were those melancholy sounds, in the ancient and vaulted chamber where he slept.

He started, looked up, and beheld the palmer standing before him, holding a lamp, and gazing upon him with a countenance marked by an expression so peculiar, so different to that which had hitherto characterised it, that a sense of alarm was the first of which he became conscious on being thus suddenly aroused from his uneasy rest. Yet it was not such a feeling of fear as would have disgraced one who bore arms; what he felt was an instinctive shrinking, such as might assail even the boldest heart at the sudden appearance of a supposed assassin; as the firmest man that ever lived may feel a curdling of the blood at the unexpected sight of a viper, if he accidentally meet with it in his path.

There was something extraordinary in the countenance of the palmer, as he now gazed upon the youth. The whole man seemed changed; he did not look the same being, as when, with that melancholy and reverend air, he had conversed so respectfully with Abbot Baldwin ere he went to rest. The lamp the palmer held in his hand, casting its rays of light



upwards from below the head, gave an effect to the shadows of the face that was almost of an unearthly character, and the lines of the pale countenance, when thus seen, looked stronger, deeper than they did before. There was also, in the fixed gaze of his large black eyes, a glowing expression; they darted their fierce glances upon Sir Henry from beneath a cowl which hung as low as the eyebrows over his head, and the mouth, that was agitated with a tremulous action, like a leaf as it quivers in the blast, indicated an emotion too strong to be suppressed. Indeed, every feature seemed to betray the passions and the smothered resentments of a vindictive mind.

Surprised by the appearance of a stranger at such an hour, and evidently under the influence of such strong emotions, the first thought that darted on the mind of Sir Henry de Pomeroy was, that an assassin had stolen upon his sleep. He sprang up, therefore, and seized his dagger, which lay near his bed.

"What!" exclaimed the palmer, "do you fear an unarmed man? Can this lamp slay you? I have no weapon."

Ashamed of his precipitation, Sir Henry threw down his dagger, and said: "Wherefore am I thus disturbed, at such an hour, and in so strange a manner?"

"Peace!" said the palmer, "peace! what I would say, even for your own sake, rash youth, must be spoken in secret. For, of our conference this night must no man know, and, least of all men, Baldwin, the wily monk. Ere you will be stirring on the morrow, my purposes will compel me to quit these walls. I am not now come with so much danger to us both (for I warn you there is danger in our meeting at this hour) to be questioned by you. Answer briefly what I shall propose to you, and fear not."

"I fear no man," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "but who are you who thus address yourself to me in the accents of command? On what authority?"

"On an authority you dare not disobey, should you compel me to name it," said the palmer. "But rest assured, without

further doubt, that the motive which this night prompts me to seek a conference with you, is one whose truth and honesty stands clear in the eye of the living God, before whom no thought of the heart is veiled."

There was a solemnity in the voice and manner of the palmer, as he made this appeal to a higher power, which struck with an involuntary conviction of sincerity the mind of Sir Henry. He looked up, and in the countenance of his strange visitant he no longer saw the indications of any struggling emotions; they had passed away, and a settled calm once more prevailed in every feature. Yet, notwithstanding the conviction of truth which the tone and manner of the palmer produced in his mind, engaged as he was in one of the darkest intrigues of the day, Sir Henry de Pomeroy did not think himself warranted to promise that he would satisfy the interrogatories of the stranger without having some proof stronger than a mere assertion that he was authorised to make them. Once more, therefore, did he press on the palmer to declare himself openly.

"It may not be," he replied; "seek not to know me; I should be injurious to you did I linger near you. Maybe you have yet to learn, for you are young in life and all its sorrows, that a mind ill at ease with itself saddens other minds which come in contact with it."

"It may be so," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "but still, to me you are a stranger, and even now you evade me; but I am resolved, and ere I entertain further parley with you, I must be better satisfied."

"It must be told, then," said the palmer, in a low voice, as if thinking aloud. "Young sir, know you this token?" He placed his hand within the folds of his gown as he spoke, and from under the drapery drew forth and presented to Sir Henry de Pomeroy a silver spur.

Sir Henry started, turned pale as death, trembled, doubted, looked at the palmer, stretched forth his hand, and grasped the silver spur, as he exclaimed in a voice that had in it a tone of awe: "O heaven, my father's token!"

"Ay," said the palmer, "it was thy father's token ; that token on which he gaged a life, and lost it."

"And who art thou, who art now possessed of it? You, who possess that token, must know the fearful tale of his death—the awful nature of his accusation—the horrid doubts of his innocence—the shame,—the shame, the dishonour that clings to his memory, unredressed ! Give me, then, if it be in the power of man to give it, give me but so much knowledge of the facts as may enable me to do him justice ; to clear away the cloud that has darkened the lustre of his once honourable name. Do this, and I will fulfil your bidding, and bless you as my father's friend."

"Thus far have I suffered you to give vent to the feelings of your soul," said the palmer ; "now listen, and mark me well, for every word I utter is of import. How many years have passed since you last saw your father?"

"More than seventeen," replied Sir Henry de Pomeroy ; "I was but a child when he quitted England for the Holy Land. Where or how he fell I need not say ; the possession of that lost token assures me all the fatal tale is known to you."

"But how know you," said the palmer, in a manner the most emphatic, "how know you this is the true token, seeing you were so young when your father died?"

"The fellow of that spur, which my father retained, is still in my keeping."

"One question more," said the palmer ; "know you the history of this token, long held so precious by your father's house?"

"I do," replied the youthful knight. "The silver spurs were won in fight, by our renowned ancestor, the brave Sir Ralph de Pomeroy, at the battle of Tours, from an infidel leader whom he slew. He laid them at the feet of his commander, Charles Martel. Charles Martel himself buckled them on Sir Ralph, who vowed that, ever after, the silver spurs should be the pledge of honour with all the descendants of his house, and that if anyone bearing the name of De Pomeroy

should be accused of a breach of loyalty or of good faith, he should instantly give in token one of those silver spurs, and either retrieve it with his honour, or forfeit his life in the attempt. At the Castle of Berry Pomeroy there lies the other spur, tarnished and dishonoured, wanting its fellow."

"Thy father lost it," said the palmer; "he was accused in a point most vital to his honour; he pledged the silver spur that he would disprove the charge in single combat. The combat was allowed; he drew the sword to redeem his pledge, and lost his life in the attempt."

"But I, his son, live to do justice to his memory," replied Henry de Pomeroy; "and though his cruel adversary, who slew him, is now also no more, yet let but a man of his blood, having the heart of a man within his bosom, let him but now avenge my father perished justly, and I will meet him, and never part till one of us falls."

"There spoke the spirit of a Pomeroy," exclaimed the palmer.

"Yet one thing I would ask," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "how came you by the spur? For he who slew my father is dead. How came you by such a token? Did you know the man who vanquished a De Pomeroy—or did you know my father?"

"I did," replied the palmer; "your father was once my most trusted friend. The time may come when I may be at liberty to speak freely; when mystery shall no longer hang upon my words. My vow expires on the eve of St. John's day. It binds me to pass that day in penance at the shrine of St. Michael, in the chapel dedicated to him in the Cornish Mount. Till the eve of St. John I must say no more. Restore to me then the token; and most solemnly do I pledge my word, as a man who has known gentle nurture and the noble strife of arms, that you shall then, if you will, have the opportunity you so earnestly desire to do justice to your dead father's name."

"On these terms I restore to you the token," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy eagerly.

"It is a compact," said the palmer; "I will not fail you. Now will you answer the questions which, on this night with so much peril to myself, I have sought you to have answered. Will you make reply?"

"I will," said De Pomeroy; "for I have now neither doubts nor fears, but such as my sword must satisfy hereafter."

"Tell me, then," continued the palmer, "is it not your purpose, and, as Abbot Baldwin was proud to intimate, at his suggestion, to endeavour to win for your bride the rich Norman heiress, Adela de Marmoutier?"

"It is," replied the youthful knight.

"What know you of her?" inquired the palmer.

"Nothing more," said De Pomeroy, "than is known to all men; that the Lady Adela is young, good, beautiful, an orphan, an heiress, and ward to her kinswoman the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, the right of her guardianship being purchased from the king."

"Did you ever hear," said the palmer, "that in Normandy, where she was born, there was some mystery about the fair child Adela—about her mother's sudden death on the day of the child's birth?—ay, and that strange suspicions were whispered about a Jewish nurse?"

"A Jewish nurse!—a Jewish nurse to the child of a Christian baron, and one of the noblest of Normandy. I will not believe it."\*

"Yet are there those in Normandy," said the palmer, "who will tell you that this lovely Adela has some taint of the blood of Israel. If you wed her you are undone."

"What!" exclaimed Sir Henry de Pomeroy, "because some idle tale has gained ground that this lovely creature was nurtured by a Jewess,—in a time, maybe, of necessity,—shall I be affrighted to give up my hopes and my suit? Grant that

\* At the date of our narrative (when the cruellest persecutions of the Jews were at their height), so great was the spirit of hatred and superstition, that any child (though of Christian parents), suckled by a Jewish woman, would be held as tainted, and unfit to match with a family of any rank.

it were true, I might apply to Rome and obtain a dispensation to wed by the power of the Church."

"It could not be. Oh! there is more in this—more than you may know, or I may tell," replied the palmer; "but as you value peace and conscience,—as you would have a heart at rest within itself,—seek not this lady. Shun the path that would lead you to her."

"These are fearful warnings—there is some mystery here," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy. "I do beseech you, tell me more. Reveal to me the truth; for there is that in your manner that will not let me doubt. I do believe you speak on more assurance than the report of idle tongues."

"I must not speak more plainly," replied the palmer; "yet on the eve of St. John, when I shall fulfil to you my compact respecting the silver spur, what I shall then reveal touching that pledge of honour lost, will also disclose to you those things to which I have but darkly alluded concerning the Lady Adela. In the interval, let not a thought wander towards her; seek her not; expose not thyself to a danger that may destroy thy peace; for all men say she is lovely beyond all compare, pure in innocence, sweet as the summer rose in beauty. Shun, then, her presence, or that beauty may become to thee, as an inauspicious star, thy destiny for evil; she may remain to thee, through all thy after years, but as the dream of thy early life, when all its hopes are dead. Believe me, I speak this for thy good alone; believe me, I am not thy enemy. I am no man's enemy now."

"Yet when I first beheld you, this night," said Sir Henry, "you looked upon me, holy palmer, with a countenance that spoke a tale of fearful passion. What am I to think of this?"

"Think," replied the palmer, "that there are moments when sudden feelings, called forth by links of circumstances that connect the present with the past, will arise with fearful power within the breast; such feelings were mine when I first, on

this night, stole upon thy rest. But no more of this. Wilt thou give me thy word, never to seek the Lady Adela de Marmoutier till our conference shall be past on the eve of St. John?"

"Never!" exclaimed Sir Henry. "I will never give a promise that I have no purpose to fulfil. I will see Adela—it may be woo her, win her, wed her. Who shall say me nay?"

"That would I," said the palmer, "did she stand with her plighted hand in thine, even at the altar's foot. But words boot not. Thou wilt keep the appointed time? In peace, or in war, over land, over sea, through calm or in storm, thou wilt meet me in the chapel of St. Michael's Mount, on the eve of St. John. Thou wilt there maintain what thou hast this night spoken, in vindication of thy father's blighted fame; or thou wilt yield him to have been justly vanquished, slain by the judgment of God; for it was to the judgment of God that he referred his cause."

"I will do this," replied Sir Henry de Pomeroy. "At the appointed time I will meet thee in the chapel, and there will I avouch, even at the altar's foot, my father's honour untainted, and will afterwards maintain the same with lance or sword, in any way of battle."

"It is well," said the palmer; "and that you may do this without let or hindrance, beware of Abbot Baldwin; trust not that wily monk with the subject of this night's conference. Name me not to him more than as his pilgrim guest. And you, who have so free a spirit to peril life in the defence of a father's plighted memory, do not cast away that life as a thing of little price. You are leagued with dangerous men; with those who will employ you for their own ends, but, when such ends are once gained, will cast you off even as they would a worn piece of armour that is no longer needed for their use. Whilst, if they fail, be sure of it, the Earl of Mortaigne would send your head, were it demanded, as a peace offering to his brother

Richard (should Richard once more return to rule over his own realm), as freely as he would cast the head of the commonest criminal to the carrion birds around the block. His self-love is absolute. Believe me, the ungrateful scruple not to become the betrayer; and is not John an ingrate to his noble brother? Trust no such man. Farewell! keep my counsel, act upon it, and till the eve of St. John, again farewell."



## CHAPTER XI.

The careful cold hath nipt my rugged rind,  
And in my face deep furrows eld have plight;  
My head besprent with hoary frost I find,  
And by mine eye the crow his claw doth write;  
Delight is laid abed, and pleasure past;  
No sun now shines, clouds have all over past.

SPENSER.

From early youth war hath my mistress been.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

THE castle of the Lady Alicia de Beaumont was situated at a distance of about three miles from Tavistock. It stood in the midst of a wild but beautiful country: river, rocks, woods, hill and valley, combined to render it delightful. The park for deer, and a thick forest, principally of oaks and beeches, arose to the north of the edifice, whilst in an opposite direction lay several villages, with their ancient churches and monastic cells, over-topped by lofty trees. The Tavy for many miles here wound its course, forming those picturesque reaches and bends which give such a character of variety to the scene. Nor were there wanting rich meadows and pasture-lands, dotted with the cottages of the poor; the sight of which, in a cultivated landscape, never fails to raise a pleasing emotion within the breast.

Opposite in character to these objects of pastoral beauty arose in the distance the lofty and far-extending heights of Dartmoor. The scene, though desolate, was replete with

grandeur. Its granite tors, its tumultuous rivers, its wild and soaring birds, its majestic solitudes, and its imperishable records of Celtic antiquity, all combined to give it the deepest interest; whilst under every change, if partially enveloped in its mantle of clouds, or illumined by the brightest beams of an evening sun, the effects of the moor were always imposing.

A path through the forest led from the public road to Wilsworthy Castle. The building, though somewhat rugged and sombre, was nevertheless a noble pile. Its most ancient portions were Saxon, plain and massive. There was something in their construction, marked by simplicity and strength, that appealed to the imagination; and the beholder, as he looked on those primitive towers and walls, was reminded of the days of the princely Alfred, when so much of that which was great and noble mingled itself with all the plain and simple characteristics, both public and private, of the times.

The castle had been erected on an eminence near the Tavy; it was of considerable extent, and surrounded by a fosse. Before the entrance, or rather drawbridge, was that outer work, called the ante-mural or barbican. It consisted of a lofty wall, battlemented, and designed to repel the first assaults of an enemy. The castle itself arose beyond the fosse; its strong and high walls were creneled and battlemented, and six round towers (two of which were on each side of the gateway) were seen flanking the walls. Within the latter stood that range of buildings, of more recent date, which constituted the dwelling, chapel, and offices of the inhabitants. And again within this (the inner bale as it was designated) arose, overtopping all, the round and rugged donjon or keep. It stood like a weather-beaten and rough old warrior, who, by the years and services that have passed over his head, has gained the right to watch and to command all the younger and less experienced aspirants to honour and to arms.

The castle gates were of oak, and so thickly studded with iron-headed nails, that they were as a casing of armour to the doors. A smaller door, called the wicket, next the larger

entrance, was constantly used, as the great gates were much too ponderous to open on every occasion, and were seldom moved except for the ingress and egress of mounted persons, or on occasions of state. There was an iron grating, or portcullis, which dropped down before the great gates, from a hollow in the wall above, in times of danger or assault; but on all other occasions it was kept raised, with only its long iron spikes, like the teeth of a shark, to be seen, showing what fangs were ready to tear the hardy foe, who should but attempt to pass for any hostile purpose within the jaws or entrance to the body of the building. Over the gateway were likewise those machicolations, or openings, through which might be poured down upon an enemy, from the battlements above, melted pitch, boiling water, fire, stones, or any other tokens of salutation likely to check his curiosity, did he attempt to penetrate beyond the permitted bounds.

We here say nothing about the interior of the edifice, with its dismal cells or dungeons under ground, where, in most castles, in Norman times more especially, such scenes of cruelty were enacted by many of the fierce and tyrannical barons of the period.

On the walls of the castle, both by day and by night, the watch paced his round; and on the least signal of alarm being given, the deep-toned bell in the chapel would, in a few minutes, call up all in the fortress, to arm in its defence.

Cædmon, the Saxon page, drew near the castle, bearing in his bosom a letter from my Lord Abbot to the fair châtelaine, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont. Well did he remember that the time had been when his own ancestors were the lords of the castle which he now approached as a menial, being only saved in his own person from the condition of a slave by the will of another, with whom good fortune, more than his own merit, had rendered him a favourite.

Hitherto Cædmon had appeared to most men but as a quiet and reserved youth, who was bent on his studies, and obedient to his superior, within whose mind no strong feeling slumbered,

awaiting but occasion to give it birth. The world, however, who thus thought of him, were but as the world always are, judges of the surface, incapable of appreciating either persons or motives which do not lay themselves open to the common gaze.

Near the commencement of the path through the forest we have named, stood, somewhat apart from the village to which it belonged, a church. Its ancient stone cross arose near the entrance to the churchyard; around its base were three or four steps, that served either as seats for the peasantry to rest or to kneel upon, as they might feel disposed to sit or to pray. Some lofty elms and antique yews, with their sombre boughs, afforded a melancholy shade to the spot thus consecrated to religion—to the services of the living and the dead.

As Cædmon approached, he observed, sitting on the lowest step at the base of the cross, an aged man, whom he recognised as a Saxon named Wulfred; one who had followed the late Lord de Beaumont to the wars in the Holy Land. He had lived to return, and, as he had been a favoured vassal, he was now allowed to end his days in ease and comfort, in a small cottage, on the lands of the Lady Alicia, to whom he belonged (agreeably to the laws of the time respecting the Saxon serfs) as much as did the cattle or the trees upon her estate.

Old Wulfred was known the country round, and universally respected. He was, in fact, the village oracle. Men of his own standing (few such remained) would sit with him and hear him discuss, with mutual satisfaction, how different things were now to what they used to be; how much worse the world was grown; how there were no such men now as he could recollect in his boyish days; men who resisted to the last the yoke of the Norman conquest, and died when they could do no more.

The villagers, of both sexes and of all ages, loved to congregate around the old Saxon Crusader, to hear him tell them tales of the perils he had run, the sights he had seen, and the battles he had been engaged in by land and by sea. Even

some of the higher and prouder classes were not altogether without sympathy for Wulfred. Many a Norman knight, forgetting his prejudice against a Saxon born, would feel some kindly emotions spring up within his breast at the sight of those silver hairs, and that venerable aspect, if he chanced to meet the old man in his rounds; as, with a shaking hand, he would doff his thrum bonnet, and give the noble stranger a *Salve domine*—for he knew as much Latin as composed a Catholic blessing.

The children knew also when they might tease him to play with them at fighting the Saracens, and he to be King Richard; and when they must leave off and let him alone. And they never forgot what sort of ash and hazel branches he liked best to have brought to him, when they wanted him to cut them lances, or bows, and string them for their games; and long ago had he instructed them how to cry “Remember the Holy Sepulchre!” every evening at sun down, as if he had been still in the camp of the Crusaders.

As Cædmon approached, he perceived Wulfred sitting, without his thrum bonnet, at the foot of the cross, basking in the sun. Two or three little ones were gathered round him; whilst Wulfred, leaning with both hands on the head of his staff, was trying to sing to them an old camp tune, in a tremulous voice, by way of accompaniment to a Saxon glee game they had learnt from his instructions. As he thus sat, his white hairs glittering like threads of silver in the sun, and his hale and ruddy cheek wearing a deeper flush than usual from its warmth, he looked like one whom Time had approached with a gentle hand, as if reluctant to overthrow the manhood of a soldier, who had so bravely, and for so many years, resisted all attacks of fortune.

“A good-morrow to you, father,” said Cædmon, as he took off his bonnet in token of respect. “Ever I see, in our good old Saxon times, even in these children’s games.”

“Alas! we are all children now, and not men,” said Wulfred, looking up, as Cædmon came upon him. “Is it you,

Cædmon? You seldom come near us, now. Have you, too, left us, for the Norman, like all the world beside? But men, nowadays, forget everything, almost their mother-tongue in this new jargon of the French. So that men do not even give the time of the day in a way that a Christian can understand."

"I speak ever to you in Saxon, Wulfred," said Cædmon; "so that reproach cannot apply to me. And for not coming near you of late, I have so much to do in the scriptorium for my Lord Abbot, that I seldom go beyond the walls of the monastery; and there our abbot has restored the Saxon school, to preserve our language from being forgotten in this new *Lingua Franca*."

"St. Dunstan bless him for it!" said Wulfred. "He is the only Norman I have known who valued the ancient tongue that was talked by our first parents in Paradise."

Cædmon assented, for he had adopted, as implicitly as Wulfred himself, the popular belief of his countrymen, respecting the language of Adam and Eve; averring that the Devil tempted her in Norman-French: a matter of tradition taught by all the Saxon monks, who loved not their Norman conquerors, and who would have staked their lives upon the truth of the doctrine.

"And how like you the Lord Abbot and the monastery?" inquired Wulfred.

"Well," answered Cædmon, "as times go. I love well my books; and so I cannot do other than love my Lord Abbot, who has made it my duty to live among them."

"I see how all this will end," said Wulfred: "you will at last become a monk. That fondness for turning monk, and leaving the crossbow, to take up in its stead the crucifix, has been the ruin of our country."

"It has," replied Cædmon. "That grave and godly historian, Bede, a portion of whose Chronicle I am now copying for our abbey, laments that the warlike spirit of the Saxons gave way to a too great love of monastic ease; he foretold to

what dangers it would lead. And, in good faith, all the most able men were in cells, and few left to defend unhappy England at the time of the invasion; so that the Norman William had her at advantage. But deem not so of me, Wulfred. Am I not Cædmon the Saxon, the son of Cædmon, the son of Oswy, the red-haired? Can I, think you, look on yonder castle, and forget that I am its natural lord?"

"You are,—you are," said Wulfred eagerly. "But, alas! another has the power now, and the lordship has passed to a foreigner and an alien. And how passed—not as other lands have done, but by——" He paused.

"Tell me, Wulfred, I beseech you, tell me all the circumstances. I know little more of my own family than that my grandsire, Oswy, the red-haired, was a Saxon, the lord of yonder proud castle, degraded by the Normans, but still a thane; till, for some bold act of his, he was cruelly and treacherously dealt with by the powers that then ruled the land. This is all I know. Tell me then the rest; I can bear the truth of my misfortunes; for no coward's heart beats, I trust, within the bosom of Cædmon."

"You were ever a brave child!" exclaimed Wulfred. "Oh, Cædmon! my dear young master!—for by birth and right you are my natural lord, and I your vassal—you know but little of yourself. Listen then to me, and I will tell you all the sad tale, ere Wulfred, the grayheaded old serf, who was born on your father's land, broke his bread at his board, and bore his arms, as his armour-bearer to the battle, shall be dead."

A gleam of intelligence came over his venerable face, and seemed to enliven every feature, as he raised his furrowed brow, fixed his blue eye, in which was seen the gathering drops of feeling, affectionately on Cædmon, and said again: "You were ever a brave child!"

"It was I who took thee from thy mother's arms, to prove thee, after our old Saxon custom, on the roof of my own cottage. There thou didst sit undismayed, never crying or falling; but thou didst laugh and clap thy tiny hands as a

couple of birds flew fighting—fierce as Saracen and Christian—over thy head; and they gave not over their battle till the one beat the other down upon the thatch at thy feet. The mistress of divination, Thorbiorga, the Saxon witch, passed by at the moment, and she did foretell——”

“What!” exclaimed Cædmon.

“Great things of thee,” answered Wulfred; “that thou shouldst be fatal in the day of strife to thy enemies; fatal to thy Norman masters.”

“But that day will never come,” said Cædmon; “for I am poor, powerless, obscure—little better than a slave. How fell my grandsire Oswy; he who lost yonder castle?”

“You shall hear anon,” said Wulfred. “Oswy paid all due tribute in money, men, and arms, to the Norman king, to be allowed to live in his own castle as a degraded thane. I was much about his person, and I soon saw how affairs would go with him, when I observed that though he kept the day of payment, he could not keep his temper; that would break out, and many scornful words passed between him and the officers of the king’s exchequer, when they called on him, as a Saxon noble, for the payment of the tribute. Where malice lies smouldering like a hidden fire in the heart, it will soon break out; and so it did now.”

“Was it not the sheriff of Devon who accused him of some crime, and caused him to be fined and amerced?”

“The sheriff accused Oswy,” said Wulfred, “of having been in league with certain traitors at Launceston to upset the Norman rule. Oswy was innocent, but impatient; he refused to pay a fine for an offence he had not committed; he was at last driven to resistance by the way of arms. His castle was besieged; he fought bravely, till, from want of food for his men, he could no longer hold out. At length Oswy, as a last effort, made a sally on the besiegers; in his haste to do so, his standard was forgotten. It was deemed an ill omen; but Oswy soon found a way to raise the drooping spirits of his people. ‘What!’ he exclaimed, ‘do you fall back? Will you



desert me, and abandon my cause, because the standard is not in the field? I will give you a standard—one from which no man dare fly and hope to live, either in body or in soul. Here is your standard!’ And so saying, he leaped on the topmost step of this very cross where I now rest my weary limbs, dashed his shield against the topmost stone, till it rang again to the blow, and shouted: ‘I swear to defend this cross, as the ensign of God’s victory, till my arms be torn from my grasp, and my body trampled under foot!’”

“Oh, gallant Oswy!” exclaimed Cædmon, “such an example must have been inspiring.”

“It was, it was!” said Wulfred; “a spirit of enthusiasm ran through the troubled ranks swift as the lightning along the cloud in a dark and stormy sky. All rushed towards their leader, shouting as their war-cry, ‘The Cross! the Cross! the Saxon and the Cross!’ There they made their stand, and there the noble Oswy bit the dust.”

“I can read the sequel,” said Cædmon. “My father, then a youth, lost with his father’s life all claim to his inheritance; for Oswy had died bearing arms against his Norman masters, the oppressors of the realm.”

“The castle and domain, that should have been thy father’s, gentle youth,” said Wulfred, “were forfeited to the State; and were afterwards bestowed on a Norman baron.”

“I have heard that you, Wulfred, fought to the last by the side of my grandsire, and became a prisoner to that Lord de Beaumont who was in the field against Oswy, and took possession of his castle almost immediately after his death.”

“I stood over the body of my slain chief,” said Wulfred, “till I sunk under the wounds I received in the effort to preserve his corpse from the spoilers, who would gladly have stripped it for the sake of the linked mail. I sunk down then in doing my duty at the foot of this cross, where he fell, and therefore can I now kneel upon it with comfort in my age. I did not spare the young head then for the love I bore to my

earthly master; and, maybe, therefore is it that the old head is protected now by its heavenly Master."

The aged soldier passed his trembling hand over his gray locks as he spoke, as if he would illustrate his discourse by the action. Tears were in his eyes as he added: "Oh, that was a sad day, and a sad fall!"

"And how came you to be spared, when so many were put to death for treason, after the battle?" inquired Cædmon.

"The Lord de Beaumont had charge of the wounded prisoners," replied Wulfred; "he was a humane man, though a Norman baron; one who looked on a Saxon as something better than a dog or a Jew. So he caused the wounded to be conveyed back to the castle; of which he took possession in the name of the State—they gave it to him afterwards as his own,—and there I lay, grievously sick of my wounds, for more than two months, hanging between life and death."

"But you lived, Wulfred," said Cædmon, "to serve for many a year your new master the Norman baron, as faithfully as you had formerly done your Saxon chief."

The old man paused; and Cædmon, who felt that deep interest that in a great measure awes whilst it subdues—which the griefs of the old are so sure to convey to a gentle and a generous mind—endeavoured to draw off his attention from a subject so full of painful recollections; and asked him how he came to take the Cross.

"Oh, very naturally," replied Wulfred. "This cross, on whose base I now rest—where fell my noble master—where I was wounded and taken prisoner—this cross haunted me day and night. I saw it everywhere, and in my dream it always rose up before me covered with blood. So I vowed a vow in my sickness, that might I but live, and once more bear arms, I would, to expiate my sins, and obey the evident commands of heaven, petition my Lord de Beaumont to let me follow in the expedition he meditated to the Holy Land. He gave his consent; but some circumstances delayed his going to

Palestine, so he sent me thither in the train of another baron before he went himself."

"You were not with him then, when he was slain?" said Cædmon.

"I was not," replied Wulfred. "There were many sad circumstances attending his death; and though he was a Norman, and had possession of the castle that was once the noble Oswy's, and should now have been yours, I could not but sorrow for my Lord de Beaumont, for he was as gallant a leader as ever led a follower to the holy wars. And so humane was he as a master to our unhappy race, that he had obtained the name of the 'poor Saxon's friend.'"

"I would he were still alive, and lord of yonder castle," said Cædmon; "for possibly so brave a man would not have forgotten that in the veins of Cædmon ran gentle blood. But this is vain talking; he is dead, and women now bear the rule in my father's halls. I have a letter from my Lord Abbot to one of them. Wilt thou marshal me the way, for I am yet a stranger to Wilsworthy Castle?"

The old man rose to do so, and sighing deeply, as he thought in what manner the young and true heir, for the first time, was about to visit the home of his forefathers, he led the way, with a melancholy spirit, and scarcely spoke till he stood without the castle gates.

## CHAPTER XII.

In peasant life he might have known  
As fair a face, as sweet a tone;  
But village notes could ne'er supply  
That rich and varied melody,  
And ne'er in cottage maid was seen  
The easy dignity of mien,  
Claiming respect, yet waiving state,  
That marks the daughters of the great.

SCOTT'S *Rokeby*.

CÆDMON soon found himself within the walls of his forfeited inheritance. He was ushered into a noble Gothic apartment, the hall of audience, where all was so different to the usages of modern times, that we must lay before our readers a slight sketch of the scene.

The hall was lofty; it was principally distinguished by an air of gloomy grandeur, a dark vaulted ceiling of carved oak, and its tall shafted and painted window, formerly of richly stained glass, the subdued light of which fell on a floor inlaid with glazed tiles—for even at this early period the latter had been imported into England by the Flemings. The hangings were of the richest tapestry, embroidered by the Saxon dames of the race of Oswy, long before the Conquest, when no nation in Europe could compete with the ladies of our island in the beauty and richness of their needlework.

Several suits of armour, some of which had formerly belonged to another race of men, hung on the walls, with weapons of war and of the chase, and numerous banners, the

trophies of many a well-fought field. Beneath the great window stood erect a suit of armour, surmounted by a helmet, with the visor closed ; bearing on the left arm the shield, and in the right mailed hand, the lance. This pageant, as the subdued light from the painted glass streamed upon it, appeared with an imposing effect to anyone entering the hall from the opposite side. The suit had belonged to the late Lord de Beaumont, and when thus seen, it had altogether so much, not only of his height, but of his very air, that in the dusk of the evening it caused the timid and the superstitious to feel a shudder pass through their veins as they looked upon it ; it stirred the imagination as a thing ready to start into life. The stools, tressels, and tables, that constituted the furniture for domestic use, were of the richest carved oak, adorned with embroidery ; and at the end of the hall were, as usual, perches for the hawks.

The chamberlain and house-steward, the former carrying his white wand, like a master of the ceremonies, and the latter having the badge of the family embroidered on the breast of his tunic, conducted Cædmon with every mark of respect into this hall, as soon as they learnt that he came on a message from my Lord Abbot to their lady.

Cædmon, in whose manner and address there was all that grace which the refined feelings of the poet and the gentleman seldom fail to convey, paused as he entered, and made his obeisance to the noble ladies in whose presence he now stood. He was struck with admiration, and scarcely knew which he most admired, the majestic Lady Alicia, in the full maturity of womanhood, or the lovely Lady Adela, in the bloom of youthful charms. With the former, the character of her beauty was commanding ; she was neither young nor old, but very fair :

“ For Time had laid his hand so gently on her,  
As he, too, had been awed.”

She was attired in a gown or tunic of green ; a rich girdle of jewels bound her waist, and her embroidered robe fell from

her shoulders in long and ample folds. Her *aumônière* (a small pouch in which she kept money for the poor, and the altars of saints) depended from her left side; on the right was a rosary; a collar of jewels encircled her throat; she had bracelets of the same; and a caul of gold network covered her head, and secured her veil. Nothing could be more rich than this attire, or more eminently handsome than the widowed châtelaine by whom it was worn.

The Lady Adela was attired in a very similar costume, but more simple, having on her head only a chaplet of roses, and wearing her hair according to the fashion of the period with girls of her age, in two long plaits falling over her shoulders.

The ladies were seated at a table, where lay their materials for needlework, hawks' bells, tassels, and lures, Adela's lute, and the fool's gilt bauble; the last-named emblem, just before Cædmon entered, having been taken from the fool by the Lady Alicia, because Patch had amused himself, and teased her ancient nurse, by using it in no very courteous way, to the discomposure of the long ends of her favourite's cendal tippet. Nurse Cicely, for such was her name, and Patch, completed the group assembled in the hall; these menials being both privileged persons; the latter on account of his office, to supply food for mirth and conversation to lighten the dull hours; and the female gossip on a much higher ground of consideration, that of having nursed in infancy the Lady Alicia herself; from whom she had been separated for many years, whilst her mistress was in Normandy, but to whom she had gladly returned, on her arrival once more in England, in the hope to end her days at Wilsworthy Castle.

Nurse Cicely was a great curiosity; she was tall and straight as a maple, but a little more bulky. Her face was full of conceit and consequence; with a double chin, which, as she carried her head high, and drew it backward whenever she spoke to an inferior, seemed to stand prominently out, as if it claimed for itself alone the respect that might be due to the whole portly person. Her cheeks also looked always warm,

and in order perhaps to afford them a cool air, she was very much in the habit of raising puffs of it, greatly to the increase of her own importance, by the constant exercise of a large round fan, much in vogue in her day, made from the blue, green, and burnished feathers of the peacock.

At the moment the Saxon page entered the hall, she was standing behind her mistress, putting something right that was amiss about her head-gear. But the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, without heeding her attendant, rose as he advanced, pleased with his appearance; and on the recommendation of his open countenance and gentle bearing (without knowing what were his pretensions in virtue of his blood to her castle), she bade him welcome to it with the utmost courtesy, took from him, with a smile, the abbot's letter, which Cædmon presented to her on his knees, and pressing it to her lips, as all the laity never failed to do an epistle that came from such a quarter, broke the seal, loosed the silken string, and forthwith read the contents: for Lady Alicia could read, rare as that accomplishment was not only with ladies, but even with nobles and knights of her day. She, however, in early youth had been designed by her friends for the cloister, in the hope, one day, to see her an abbess; and as learning was absolutely necessary in the heads of all conventual houses, she had received a learned education, was a good Latin scholar, and was not unacquainted with the then prevalent sciences of Europe. Like Edgitha, the amiable consort of Edward the Confessor, she delighted to converse with scholars, and with one like Cædmon, who was young enough to be her son, she would argue encouragingly, but closely.

After having expressed her willingness to grant the Lord Abbot the permission he required, to hunt, with his friend, over her domain on the morrow, she proceeded to question Cædmon about the logicians at the abbey;—and it seemed she was as little inclined to favour their pretensions as Baldwin himself; but observing that his eyes were ranging around, apparently with a feeling of much interest: “What think you.

of our old hall?" she said. "It will not compare with the hall of your monastery?"

"No, it is not so large," replied Cædmon; "but, to my mind, of nobler and more beautiful proportions; less rich in ornament, but far exceeding it in grace. Oh, lady! brave men have walked these halls in days for ever gone! Hearts have here beat high with hope and energy, that soon were destined never to beat again, when summoned to defend them."

Cædmon sighed deeply as he uttered the last words. The Lady Alicia was surprised; and the Lady Adela, whose youth and modesty had hitherto kept her silent, ventured to look up, when, on seeing the shade of melancholy which stole over the fine open features of the Saxon youth, though she knew not the cause of his emotions, she experienced that sympathy with his feelings which in the young and ingenuous bosom ever springs up, as it were spontaneously, at the mere presence of sorrow. Such a sense of pity never waits till it obtains the sanction of the judgment, for the young always feel before they think, at the sight of distress.

Wishing, therefore, to say something kind to Cædmon, yet not very well knowing what to say, the Lady Adela blushed as she gave utterance to the first thing that occurred to her, in a voice whose sweetness was delightful to the ear.

"You have not perhaps, gentle stranger, observed the pictures here; they are held in great estimation by limners. See you that which represents our Lord scourged by an Arabian? This picture was painted at the desire of Peter the Hermit; and was sent by him from court to court among the princes of Europe, to rouse their indignation, that they might hasten to the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre."

"It is a picture of marvellous curiosity," said Cædmon; "but surely it would better suit our abbey church than these walls; it is fit for the contemplation of godly men. For my own part, I confess that the portraits of these warriors interest me more."

Cædmon pointed as he spoke to a painting on panel, repre-



senting a man seated on a war-horse, that he was restraining by bit and bridle, impatience for action expressed in every limb. The rider was a martial figure; he was depicted wearing a hauberk of chain-mail, bareheaded, his mantle waving in the wind, and holding, perched on his wrist, a hawk, the distinction of noble blood.

"How admirable is that picture!" said Cædmon. "See how impatient the horse seems to be, as he paws the ground, eager to start forward with his rider! And the rider, how majestic! He is a Saxon too; I am glad of it: his hauberk is of the old fashion. Harold wore such a coat in the fatal field of Hastings. He too, would sometimes ride forth bareheaded into action. But Harold could not have looked nobler than yonder Saxon chief when he did so. My life on it, he whom that picture represents was a gallant warrior. Lady, may I crave his name?"

"It is the portrait of the former proprietor of this castle," said the Lady Alicia.

"Oswy, the noble thane!" exclaimed Cædmon, with great animation, as a feeling of gratified pride gave a glance of fire to his eyes, and a flush to his cheeks, while he fixed a speaking look on the Lady Alicia, and said, in a voice deep and impressive from the strength of his emotions: "Lady, it is the grandson of Oswy who now stands before you!—who now comes as menial to his father's halls!"

Surprise for a moment kept the Lady Alicia silent; but there was so much about Cædmon, in person, manner, and feeling, calculated to awaken for him an interest in the bosom of the gentler sex, that he needed not the additional claim of misfortune to touch the generous mind of the lady of the castle in his favour. Knowing, though by the law of conquest and of his king's pleasure, that her late husband had become honourably possessed of the fortress, of which she was now the châtelaine and mistress, yet she could not, as a woman, see the natural heir, innocent as he was of all offence, stand before her as a menial, without a sense of compassion—of embarrass-

ment that was most painful. She felt the strongest interest for the personal merits of the young man, pity for his misfortunes, and the fear to wound afresh his already deeply wounded feelings. All these thoughts and feelings contributed to embarrass her; and she, who would have felt herself perfectly at ease in the courts of kings, now scarcely knew to what subject to turn for relief in the presence of a poor Saxon page.

But, had she known better the character of Cædmon's mind, she need not have distressed herself on his account. A strong and overpowering feeling, at the moment he was told whom the picture represented, had surprised him; and on the sudden impulse he had declared his descent from Oswy. But this done, all was over. He knew too well the extent of his misfortunes to dwell upon their hopelessness.

The place in which he now stood was new to him, but not the thoughts the sight of it had so suddenly called up with so much poignancy and vigour: the thoughts of his grandsire slain, his castle lost; his father outlawed, dead,—of himself, an orphan, poor, dependent, the outcast of a despised race, living among enemies who had wrought for him and his unhappy countrymen all their woes. These were the recollections that rushed across the mind of Cædmon, and shook his inmost soul, as he stood before the portrait of the illustrious Oswy. But they passed away; he had turned from them with a sickening sensation, and the heart that had for a moment beat high with pride, sunk again, as he said in a voice of emotion: "Lady, is there no portrait of my father?"

On receiving the assurance that there was none, Cædmon turned aside, and stood before another picture to hide his face from observation, to gain a short pause to recover his resolution, and become once more master of himself.

The Lady Alicia, glad as himself to be relieved, retreated to write an answer to the abbot. The Lady Adela, who felt that uncomfortable sensation which hangs on every individual of a company where something has gone wrong of too delicate a nature to be noticed by anyone present, now endeavoured to *relieve* her own sense of awkwardness by the exercise of her

fingers rather than her tongue, and worked on the faster, being most intently engaged on the embroidery of a mantle.

Patch was talking to one of the hawks, which had flown down from its perch and settled on his wrist. Nurse Cicely stood fanning herself, as usual, when she thought she ought to be occupied. Everybody was silent, except Patch with his hawk.

Things were in this not very agreeable position, when one of the servitors, or borrel churls (for borrel was the livery of the Lady Alicia), announced the arrival of the new bower-maiden to wait on my Lady Adela; and soon after Grace Bolt made her appearance; for, anxious to avoid the importunities of Sir Simon, she had sought service, and had here obtained it by the influence of Dame Cicely, who was her most especial friend.

Grace entered the hall with her hands crossed before her, making a curtsy at every step, and blushing, till cheeks, neck, and ears, reddened at the utter confusion and dismay she experienced on finding herself in such a presence, and with the whole length of the hall to walk up by herself, with everybody looking at her, before she could reach the Lady Adela.

Grace's entrance was a relief to all but herself; for the miller's daughter was something that might be talked to at this embarrassing moment without fear of its leading to any painful subject. And with many little idle questions and simple answers of "No" and "Yes," accompanied by a blush and a curtsy at every word, on the part of the damsel, did the Lady Adela contrive to fill up the time till the Lady Alicia returned with her letter to the Lord Abbot. This she very courteously delivered to his page, and bidding him a good-morrow with the gentlest tone and air, dismissed him, without further delay, from her presence and her castle. Soon after both aunt and niece quitted the hall, leaving Grace Bolt to the care and tuition of Nurse Cicely, who, dismissing Patch after the example of her betters (but not quite so civilly as her mistress did Cædmon), undertook to make the new bower-woman acquainted with all the duties and mysteries of her office.

## CHAPTER XIII.

Go bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.

SHAKSPEARE.

"Who hath seen the palmer this morning?" was the first question asked by Abbot Baldwin, after he had returned from matins, where he had not observed him among the other pilgrims.

"That have I, most holy father," said the seneschal, who stood near. "For being exempt from attendance at matins to-day, on account of having my duty to perform without doors, to make your reverence's presents to certain knights having their lodgment in the town, and also to give notice to the tenants and vassals on what day I purposed to hold your reverence's court——"

"How prolix thou art grown of late, old man," said Baldwin; "I ask if thou hast seen our palmer guest, and thou tellest me about holding our courts and making our customary presents. Keep the straight road in thy speech, for we neither like a starting nag, nor a roundabout speaker. Where didst thou see the palmer?"

"In brief, then, my lord, I saw him at early dawn casting his pebbles: some of which I conclude he must have laboured to bring with him all the way from Syria, upon the Mount Joy, in acknowledgment of his safe return from the Holy Land. I was in haste, and as the Mount Joy stands near to

the hermitage of St. John, I did not pause to give the palmer a 'good morrow,' fearing the hermit might come forth and join in our discourse, and so delay me; for the hermit is a great prater, and very circumstantial in the plainest matter of discussion."

"Even like thyself, worthy seneschal," said Baldwin; "therefore thou likest him not. And so the palmer is gone? But where is Sir Henry de Pomeroy? We will but take a slight refecton, and then bid the grooms bring round the horses to the gates; and we will forward to hunt the stag over the grounds of our good neighbour the Lady Alicia de Beaumont."

Accordingly, the abbot made a short breakfast on that morning; and the chief grooms, whilst preparing the horses for the chase, had as usual to listen to the growling and grumbling of an old Saxon huntsman, the best the country round, and therefore retained in his office at the abbey, notwithstanding his perpetual outcry against the Norman tyranny of the New Forest Laws.

"So we are to hunt to-day," said old Willibald, following the strain of his accustomed humour; "to hunt over the domain of my Lady de Beaumont; and the Norman dame's permission has been asked and had so to do. Good Saxon lands are they, for all that. Much rather would I see the pack loosed on them, to hunt off the usurping holders of the property, than on the poor foolish deer."

"Why, you did not use to care much who was the owner of the lands you hunted over, so long as there was good sport, Willibald," said one of the grooms; "how is it that you are grown so nice about it now?"

"Because," answered Willibald, "the great people have grown so reckless about the poor folk in their sports. Hunting and hawking used to be followed only as sports in my young days; but now knights and barons seem to think it is the only thing they have to do in this land; and they pursue the wild beasts of the forest with more fury than they do a Jew or a

Saracen, which is a great sin. Why, I tell you the hunters nowadays have become as savage and as fierce as the very brutes they chase. See how they serve the poor husbandmen, and their flocks and herds; they drive them from their pastures and fields that wild boars may range among them undisturbed."

"Ay," said a helper of old Willibald, who had caught from him something of his humour, "ay, and if these hunters pass a poor man's door, look to it well; let him hasten to bring forth the best the house can afford, and readily, or woe be to him, he is a ruined man, or is straight accused of some foul treason."

"But my Lord Abbot is no such hunter as these," said Dick the groom; "he likes only the red deer; and is not one of those who, as Geoffrey Malduit, think it a greater crime in a vassal to transgress the forest laws, than it is to kill a man."

"Ay," said Willibald; "curse the Dane Canute! I say—though men do call him great—who first thought of such laws. And the foul fiend keep the spirit of the Norman William in his hottest purgatory! for he made those laws even yet more galling to man and beast; for the very dogs suffer by them, and are maimed, unless they belong to privileged masters; but we have no hearts, no spirits, to deal with oppressions, as readily as to hear and see them, else would every Saxon rise, to a man, in these kingdoms, and soon shake off the Norman yoke."

Here the social grumblings and discontents of Willibald and his friend Dick were disturbed by an obediendiary, who came to hasten their preparations for the field. In a little time all was ready, and a gallant train of hunters set forward to the chase.

Though we will not say that our abbot was as famous a hunter as Nimrod, or even as Walter, Bishop of Rochester, who in the twelfth century was so celebrated for his love of the chase, that, when above eighty years old, he made it the sole business of his life, leaving his diocese in spiritual matters to take care of itself; yet Abbot Baldwin loved hunting.

In his fondness for the field he rather resembled a churchman he greatly admired and constantly imitated, more especially in his taste for opposition and quarrels—the famous Thomas-à-Becket, who sought the chase as a recreation and a relief to the more weighty matters in which he was engaged; so that when he went on an embassy to the King of France, he took with him, amongst the other attendants of his costly train, dogs and hawks proper for the field.

Our abbot, accompanied by the prior, several other ecclesiastics, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and a train of nearly fifty persons, now came forth, equipped with bows and arrows, the weapons always used in hunting the stag.

On this day neither the abbot nor Sir Henry had forgotten that, though their apparent object was a hunting-match, their more essential one was to obtain for Sir Henry a fair opportunity of forming an acquaintance with the ladies of the castle. Neither, therefore, had neglected his dress. The light suit of Lincoln green, the baldric richly worked, from which hung his bugle, the cap with its waving plume, the bow and the quiver, altogether became the fine person of Sir Henry de Pomeroy. And as to my Lord Abbot, the hunting suit in which he had arrayed himself (not having about it one thing that was ecclesiastical, except the hood, and the pendent cross on his breast) was so gay and fashionable, that, but for his vows, Sir Henry might have fancied he had some design of rivalry in view, in thus tricking himself out to appear before the eyes of a fair lady.

The varlet who rode at the head of the train bore the abbot's banner cheerily in his hand; and immediately after him came old Willibald, having slung across his shoulders both baldric and bugle; although it was deemed indecorous for an abbot's servant to blow a horn. A body of hunters and servitors carried the bows and arrows of the company; and the noble alauntes, or stag-hounds, were led on tied together in leash or in couples.

The morning had dawned with the fairest promise; only

a few light and fleecy clouds were floating slowly in the sky ; and the mist which hung about the tors indicated a day that would prove clear and genial, when those vapours should disperse before the warmth of a May sun.

Nothing could be more cheering than was such a morning to the company who now set forth from the castle. The breeze fanned, but scarcely blew ; the air was scented with the fragrance of the white-blossomed hawthorn and the early flowers of spring ; the Tavy was shining bright, and running gladly along its bed of rocks and stones ; not a rill of water but crept from its hiding-place, under banks entangled with briers and weeds, or thickly set with clusters of *primeroses* (to use old Chaucer's word for that palest and prettiest of yellow flowers) ; and all the streamlets came forth to run their course as joyously as did the river itself in the light of the sun. The dew still overspread the grass, sparkled on the hedges, or hung as a jewel on every flower.

The beautifully-limbed and rich brown cattle, peculiar to Devon, were seen in the meadows, and the tinkling of sheep-bells among the hills gave a pleasing intimation of those numerous flocks which, from time immemorial, have constituted the chief wealth of the landholders of the west.

As the party rode forward they now and then saw a hare or a rabbit, that had been started from its covert, scud timidly across the grass, and hie for shelter to the hollows and bushes that lay on every side ; whilst the birds, secure on this day from all molestation (as the company carried no hooded hawks to let fly upon them at pleasure), safe in their airy realm, and seeming as if conscious there was a peace proclaimed to the feathered nations, gladly gave notice of it to their mates and companions by their warblings and songs, and by answering each other's call in a cheering note from tree to tree.

The bee, with its humming ditty, sped from bush to bank, to taste how sweet the dew might be that lay in the bell of the hyacinth, or on the wild thyme or the May, and the dragon-fly, with its gossamer wings, and its body of gold and gems,



darted by; and the yellow butterfly, ever the first seen in spring, seemed, as it sported among the sunny flowers, as if one of the primroses had become instinct with life, and had taken wing on this fair morning. Indeed, so delightful was the scene and all its accompaniments, that every heart rejoiced under the influences of the invigorating air and the soul-inspiring face of nature.

The king of forests, the stately stag, was soon unharboured. Three long notes on the bugle gave the signal for uncoupling the hounds. And now, not only the abbot and his train, but many of the household from the castle, were seen urging forward their gallant steeds to join the hunt. Some rushed from the heights, others started from the valleys and glens; all animated by one impulse.

The uncoupling the dogs, as they stood with their deep-mouthed bayings, proclaiming their impatience, "straining on the slips," was the work of a few minutes, and "Cheerily, Hector!"—"Away, Tristram!"—"On, Brute!"—"Hyke, a Rowland!" formed a joyous acclaim from the throats of the huntsmen, as they hallooed on the hounds.

The hart already had sprung forward at the sight of his enemies, his dappled sides shaking with sudden fear. Horsemen and horses strained after him in pursuit; whilst the dogs, with that swift springing motion which makes them seem to skim rather than to tread the earth, with wide-expanded nostrils, snuffing over turf and mire, gave no rest to the hunted hart, which, flying before them, through forest, stream, and vale, at length took the direction of the moor, and was speedily on that part of it called Cudlipp Town.

Soon did the horsemen follow; all were now engaged in the very heat of the chase: the winding bugle, the shouts of the hunters, the baying of the dogs, altogether made up a chorus that rung through the woods, and woke the echoes of the sylvan scene.

It was at this crisis there was seen sweeping over the moor, from the direction of Wilsworthy, the noble mistress of that

castle, accompanied by her fair ward and a train of damsels and attendants. They were attired with hood and mantle of Lincoln green, but their manner of advance, their gestures and their speed, indicated a cause of alarm rather than of sport. No one was left in doubt as to its object, when the Lady Alicia, while she advanced, called out to one of the huntsmen who drew near her: "Save the hart!—draw off the dogs!—it is Saladin, my favourite hart, they are hunting to the death;—not for the value of half my lands would I have him slain!"

The huntsman no sooner heard his lady's commands than off he set to endeavour to fulfil them, shouting his commands to spare the hart to everyone he met.

Now these shouts happened to meet the ear of one who, seated on a fine swift horse, seemed as if he were proceeding to join the hunters, having in all probability been drawn to the spot by hearing the dogs and the bugles in full chorus along the fields. Be this as it may, the rider heard very distinctly the cry—"It is the will of my Lady Alicia that the stag should be spared"—upon which, without making any reply to it, he called to his side his varlet, who rode after him, bearing his bow. He took the bow, and forthwith rode rapidly towards the scene of action, where all the hunters might now be seen gathering.

The rider who had thus suddenly appeared was a young man of handsome aspect, though his features were of a somewhat wild cast; his complexion had been burnt by the sun to the brownness of a ripe nut: and though he wore the civil costume of the period, yet his air, his demeanour, and the *manège* of his horse were altogether knightly. He looked like a Crusader returned, after hard service in the Holy Land. We must, however, for the present leave him, and see how it fares with the hunted animal.

The stag, closely pursued, had been driven into a recess formed at the end of a lane, near the point at which it opened on the moor. The recess in question was walled in by a high bank overhung with trees, so that there was no retreat in the

rear; and in the front both dogs and men had been pouring down upon the imprisoned animal from all sides of the open space.

Thus was the hunted hart hemmed in, as the bugle sounded to bay, with a blast that was heard far and wide. The animal, at once desperate and furious, now made a determined stand. With limbs quivering, sides panting, white with foam, and eyes wild and straining, as if ready to burst their sockets in the agony of fear, the stag, now retreating, now rushing on, bending his head and butting with his antlers, threatened death to everything that approached him.

Some of the boldest of the hounds repeatedly attempted to fly at his throat, while others kept back, making their stand and baying with all their strength. Still the stag was unconquered. Several of the dogs he gored or otherwise disabled, and though nearly exhausted and about to fall to the ground, even yet he made a gallant and last struggle for his life. Whilst he was so struggling an arrow whizzed through the air, and striking the noble animal in the eye, penetrated to the brain. The hart sank at once, and the dogs, one and all, rushed in upon their fallen prey, and in another minute throttled him.

The hunters now crowded round, and drew off the hounds, lest they should mangle the carcass; and as their shouts of triumph, accompanied by the blowing of the bugle in the victorious morte-note of a hunting field rang over hill and vale, a gallant train rode forward, but all too late for the object which had brought them to the spot. It was the Lady Alicia and her suite. Dismay was in her cries, wrath in her countenance, and she trembled with passion, as she said: "The hart has fallen by a malicious hand." All seemed surprised; and she added, in that deep, low, but decisive tone, which makes itself audible even in the midst of a tumult: "I saw the man; he shot from behind yonder trees. It was Geoffrey de Malduit who slew my noble hart! After him!—secure him! he has transgressed the forest laws; he has no right to hunt on

my domain. He shall dearly suffer for this, or, by Our Lady, I am no true woman!—Secure him—he shall face me here.”

“He does face you here, lady,” said the bold horseman we have already noticed (the stranger who proceeded to join the sport), as he now rode up to the Lady Alicia, and with so much audacity, that not a man who was present but vented an exclamation expressive of his indignant feelings at the sight. Some cried “Shame!” others, “Outlaw!” and one used the word “Coward!”—that one was Sir Henry de Pomeroy. In another minute more than a dozen hunters surrounded Malduit; some pulled out their knives, others bent their bows, and an old forester approached to pull him off his horse.

“Touch me not!” exclaimed the intruder. “Touch me not! If any man lay hand on me, be he knight, varlet, or bondman, he dies on the spot!” Malduit drew forth a short dagger and flourished it over his head, more like a mummer in a dagger-dance than a warrior among men. Yet all present knew him to be a bold fellow, brutal and insolent. “And what sort of curs are ye all, I trow,—I exempt my Lord Abbot,—that you thus surround me with your drawn knives? your very hounds would teach you a more manly play, for they hunted not yonder stag without giving him law,—a chance by flight to escape their fangs. But you,—you hem in a man a whole pack of you, with an odds of twenty to one against him. And you, Sir Knight of the green jacket,—you who give the name of coward with so little ceremony,—what have you to say to me? I am a stranger to you, but trust me, I am a belted knight; will you answer for that word so insolently spoken, in a way that a gentleman may notice with honour to himself?”

“My sword is my tongue with such a one as you have proved to be this day, and with no other will I answer,” replied Sir Henry. “You have shown malice and discourtesy towards this lady; you have wilfully slain the animal she would have spared. I will answer you in any way of arms,—but it is not

well to prate of such matters in such a gentle presence,—if you dare avouch yourself a knight.”

“Dare avouch myself a knight!” exclaimed Malduit, interrupting him, as a glance of fire flashed from his eyes; “why, what else should I avouch myself? All the world knows I have given and taken blows with Saladin himself in Syria. And do you think a doubt can rest on my honour! Go to, foolish boy,—for you are but a boy to me,” continued the braggart; “what if I should think you unworthy of better than chastisement to such a malapert tongue! Hark ye! Sir Knight of the cream face; crop your woman’s locks and cultivate a beard; and possibly I may then think it worth while to talk to you in another strain.”

Sir Henry de Pomeroy’s countenance displayed all the changes of violent passion, as Geoffrey de Malduit, in a tone of calm scorn, pronounced these taunts, as if he felt quite careless about the matter. But the passions of all present were too much roused to be easily appeased; all seemed bent on taking an immediate vengeance on Geoffrey de Malduit.

In vain did the Lady Alicia interpose to prevent a further quarrel, till, fearing one of those affrays so common to the period, and commanding her own disturbed feelings, in the hope to prevent mischief, she implored the Lord Abbot to use his authority, and to restore peace in the name of the Holy Church; resolving, however, within her own mind, that she would, on the first convenient opportunity, call her sturdy enemy to a legal account for this breach of the forest laws.

For some time, in vain also did my Lord Abbot call on all men to hear in his person the voice of peace and of the Church. At length, he so far prevailed, that all thoughts of an immediate vengeance were laid aside. After the first burst of their indignation had exhausted itself in angry words, the hunters and foresters contented themselves with standing together in knots, apart from the lady and the nobles, and communicated to each other the suggestions of their suppressed rage, in low

murmurs, like thunder muttering among the tors of Dartmoor after a storm has rolled off, but has not subsided in the distance.

Malduit listened in sullen silence to what the abbot urged upon his consideration, that he ought to make compensation to the Lady Alicia for the wrong he had done on her estate ; and, as a further proof of penitence, to send an offering in gold to the altar of St. Julien, the patron saint of hunters, in the abbey church.

Geoffrey de Malduit had no desire to quarrel with my Lord Abbot ; he therefore very civilly told him, that though he honoured a churchman as much as any man, he would never think of troubling him for any advice when without the walls of his abbey. Nevertheless, for the sake of my Lord Abbot's peace, and out of respect to his person, he, Geoffrey, would, in obedience to his wishes, withdraw himself from the present company without more words ; wherefore he would at once take his leave. So saying, and giving a glance of scorn and insolence at the ladies, not omitting one of the same description at Sir Henry de Pomeroy, he withdrew from the party whose sports he had so maliciously interrupted ; an act, and by no means an isolated one, of petty revenge, for the wrongs he fancied he had sustained from the ladies of Wilsworthy Castle. In truth, so deadly was the hatred he cherished in his own breast against them, that he would have found it difficult to decide which of the two he hated most—the Lady Adela who had refused his proffered hand, or the Lady Alicia, who had encouraged her niece in that refusal.

The foresters, hunters, and attendants, who had been conferring apart among themselves, the moment after Malduit withdrew from the spot, rushed with one accord round the fallen stag. There taking their stand, each, to a man, drew forth his long hunting knife, and extending and crossing them over the body of the deer, with one voice called on St. Julien to bear witness that they would hereafter resent to the death, in a fair and open field, on Geoffrey de Malduit and all his followers, the injury done to their lady and mistress.

A shout of triumph followed this impassioned oath. Geoffrey de Malduit started, as he was slowly and sullenly retiring from the scene of the chase.

"What is that?" he said to his varlet, who now again bore his bow.

"The followers of the Lady Alicia have vowed a vow of vengeance against thee and thy people, Sir Geoffrey; I heard them mutter their intent among themselves ere we departed from the field."

"Is it so?" said Malduit; "then let the devil aid their work; I care not. I will back and tell them so."

Another minute or two brought the reckless Malduit once more before the lady and her train. "Hark ye, my men of the green wood," said Sir Geoffrey, addressing the foresters who stood around; "ye who would do battle for the lady of the smitten hart, I will meet ye all at any time or place: my followers are no cravens; they will not shun a fair field. But know ye, ye who draw the sword, that ye do it for one who has smitten in her day a nobler hart than lies dead in yonder nook."

So saying, the bold and insulting baron turned his horse back, dashed the spurs up to the rowel-head into his sides, and rode off, leaving the Lady Alicia astonished at his insolence and daring; and so incensed by it, that she shook with passion in every limb. But though thus startled, she made an effort to recover her self-possession; and hastened to express her sense of the devoted spirit that her vassals and followers had evinced for her service. And on her also expressing her thanks to the Lord Abbot for his timely interference to prevent a fray on the spot, Baldwin took the opportunity of introducing to her notice his young and gallant friend, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who had evinced so ready a spirit to maintain her cause in opposition to the brutal Geoffrey de Malduit. The lady received him very graciously, and requesting that all present would proceed to the castle, and drink a cup to refresh themselves after the fatigues of the day, she included my Lord Abbot, his friend, and their train, in the invitation with special marks of respect.

It was my Lord Abbot's pleasure to accept the invitation graciously ; and his friend's to avail himself of it with a smile, and an inclination of the head, as he drew off his plumed bonnet in token of profound respect, an action that showed his bare brow, and his fine and flowing locks to the greatest advantage.

The Lady Alicia, having once more assured her noble guests how welcome they would be to her halls, called her favourite hound to her side, and bowing to all present, turned her horse's head in the direction of Wilsworthy ; and the Lady Adela, and all her damsels, sweeping after her at gentle speed, she left the abbot, Sir Henry, and the rest of the hunters, to see the deer carted, and to follow with it, at their leisure, to the castle.



## CHAPTER XIV.

The banquet waits our presence, festal joy  
Laughs in the mantling goblet, and the night,  
Illumined by the taper's dazzling beam,  
Rivals departed day.

BROWNE.

Fill full! why, this is as it should be; here  
Is my true realm, amidst bright eyes and faces,  
Happy as fair! Here sorrow cannot reach.

BYRON'S *Sardanapalus*.

WE will not pause to describe the welcome that the Lord Abbot and Sir Henry de Pomeroy received at the castle, more than to say it was at once hospitable and courtly. At the upper end of the hall, beneath the large window, stood the dais—a raised platform, over which was spread a rich carpet, from the looms of Flanders; and here was placed the table appropriated for the lady of the castle and her guests. Along the centre of the hall were seen tables of oak, the first of which was alone permanent, the rest being nothing more than boards placed on tressels, and removed after every meal. When all the household was assembled, not less than sixty persons sat down daily to dinner. A large silver cup filled with salt stood in the middle of the tables; above this, towards the head of the hall, the freemen, yeomen, and officials took their seats; and below it sat all the vassals, serfs, servitors, and slaves of the castle.

There was grandeur in the *coup d'œil* of such an assemblage

of persons and ranks ; from the noble lady and her guests, who sat on the dais, to the very herdsman and slave, with all their intermediate grades, dining together beneath the lofty roof of that old Gothic hall. The sight was as pleasing to the feelings, as it was striking to the eye ; for it was almost the only hour, during these times of heartless oppression and suffering in England, that the higher and the lower orders seemed at all to share a pleasure in common, or to lay aside, on the one hand the constant exercise of arbitrary power, and on the other a sense of subserviency and fear, that degraded alike both freeman and slave.

After the Lord Abbot had given the benediction at the conclusion of the repast, the inferior part of the assembly withdrew ; the temporary tables were removed, and the lady, her noble guests, and the chief personages of the household alone remained seated over their cups ; which the Norman knights seasoned with much conversation, the hard drinking of the Saxons having gone quite out of fashion.

In order that mirth and music might not be wanting to enliven the social hour, the house-steward presently introduced a company of wandering joculars, whom he had appointed to attend on this occasion. These were a set of vagabond minstrels, who played on the crota, the timbrel, the tambour, pipe, and harp. They were also excellent in tumbling, dancing, balancing, and tricks of legerdemain. Some of these performances were truly surprising, and in the dark ages were duly ascribed to the power of the devil. There is every cause to believe that the magic lantern was not altogether unknown in these times ; since we read in ancient authors of whole forests of hunters being made to appear on the walls of an apartment, and then as suddenly to disappear at the pleasure of the wizard jocator. Even the old acquaintances of our childhood, Punch and Judy, were known in those days, and frequently set up in the halls of the great barons, to entertain them on a rainy day, when their lack of reading and writing left them very barren of amusements.

On the present occasion, neither the ladies nor the abbot, nor his friend, seemed to feel much interest in these exhibitions; indeed the person most delighted was Grace Bolt, who by the indulgence of the Lady Adela, had been permitted to remain with Nurse Cicely and the fool to see the shows. They were now all three standing behind the seats of the grandees.

Whilst these entertainments were going forward, Sir Henry de Pomeroy addressed his discourse to the Lady Adela in that silent language of the eyes so often alluded to by the early poets and not unknown in our own day. Much as he had heard of her merits, he found in her a superiority of charms which surpassed either his hope or his imagination, prepared as he had been by the voice of fame to receive a remarkable impression. Her attention being fixed on the sports, gave him the opportunity to watch her without being observed, though she could not for a moment look towards him without meeting his ardent glance of interest and admiration.

She was, indeed, a lovely creature: her form slender, and rather below than above the middle height; small in its proportions, but delicate and graceful in every movement. Her complexion was of a transparent clearness, tinged but scarcely coloured in the cheeks, with a roseate hue, like the maiden's blush among the roses. Her hair was blonde, and her eyes of so deep a blue that they might be compared to the ether of a starlight night; whilst her features, soft, small, and regular, altogether produced a countenance, not striking in character (like that of her aunt), but so replete with delicacy and sweetness, that when touched by an expression which arose from the tenderness and warmth of her heart, it was truly beautiful: beautiful both to the eye and to the mind. Yet this countenance, so charming, so bewitching, was not one that would have told well in a picture; for its greatest charm lay in its expression, which could no more be caught by the pencil and fixed on the canvas, than could the varying effects of the momentarily changing and lightly-tinted clouds, at the dawn of early day.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy gazed on the lovely Adela till he was enchanted ; and that evening fixed both his hopes and his fate. No longer did the wily abbot's schemes touching the possession of the young heiress's castle for a moment occupy his imagination. At this hour not the slightest recollection of such matters occurred to his mind. He remembered only that he loved.

We do not intend to follow up in detail the means by which, with the assistance of his friend the Lord Abbot, Sir Henry gradually won for himself such favour at the castle that at length he became a frequent guest within its walls.

In the interval, though the interests of his growing love had the first place in his heart, yet he did not wholly neglect those of the Earl of Mortaigne. Indeed, so far from it, that, assisted by the subtle and ambitious Baldwin, he very successfully intrigued for the cause of the young prince in the west, and meditated, in his own person, the achievement of that exploit which has obtained for him so remarkable a record both in history and tradition, and of which we shall have to speak anon in the progress of our narrative.

But these are matters for future consideration. At present we must accompany Sir Henry at the castle. Dearly as the young baron loved Adela, at the period of our tale it was so contrary to all laws, moral or divine, that anyone of rank should marry without the consent of parent or guardian, that Sir Henry never even thought of a clandestine marriage with the beautiful young heiress as a thing within the verge of possibility. The esteem of the Lady Alicia, therefore, became to him an object of the very greatest importance ; as the success of all his hopes must ultimately depend upon her will to favour his pretensions to her ward. Yet it was with the Lady Alicia that he found himself most painfully circumstanced, so difficult was it to decide in what manner she regarded his suit. Sir Henry de Pomeroy possessed considerable powers of imagination, and somehow or other the Lady Alicia kept them constantly at work. Her fame for singularity, her reputed deep sorrows, her strange and moody life, were not unknown to him ;

but the knowledge of these things made him fearful how to act. He knew that to ask her consent to address her ward when he should have openly declared himself for Prince John, might be too late ; yet to ask it too soon would be at once fatal to his hopes. In common prudence, therefore, he ought to feel something like certainty before he took so bold a step ; and yet to find out how the Lady Alicia stood affected towards him was an enigma difficult to solve.

His hopes, his fears, both conspired to make him a close watcher, a very spy upon her feelings and her actions ; so that he stood in the position of chiefly devoting his thoughts, not to the lady whom he loved, but to her mysterious and reserved guardian, and felt almost as keen an anxiety lest he should fail in winning the good graces of the one as of the other.

Hitherto, in his intercourse with mankind, the passions of Sir Henry de Pomeroy had been called into play only for the interests of his ambition ; and being a bold as well as a brave man, he seldom met with a difficulty, but, like Alexander and the Gordian knot, he at once decided on cutting it with a single stroke, rather than unravel it with patience. But very different was it now, when the passionate feelings of his character were called forth by the interest of his affections. He had no longer the decision of a bold man who dares at once place his hopes on a stake, and throw for the prize. The fear of losing all he most valued made him cautious ; so that he proceeded in that line of conduct so injurious to the peace even of the strongest mind, suspecting every little circumstance, weighing every trifling act of the Lady Alicia, and supposing a hidden motive lurked beneath all she did or said, in reference to himself. Even the frankest avowal of her goodwill became matter of suspicion with him. And thus did Sir Henry torture his mind with a thousand apprehensions and alarms, simply because he dared not at once ask the consent of the aunt, and satisfy his doubts respecting the niece.

The scenes which now took place at the castle, we feel it will be very difficult to describe to our readers. For how shall

we make them clearly understand an intercourse of looks, doubts, intimations, and suspicions? Yet in such principally consisted the extraordinary friendship, for so did each call it, which now subsisted between the noble guardian and the knightly youth.

The observant spirit of Sir Henry soon taught him that in this singular woman he had to deal with one whose passions were opposite, strong, yet controlled. There was great variation in her manner, but in her conduct her views were uniform, never capricious, and all her actions had a clear and determined aim. What might be that aim in respect to himself, he must ascertain, ere he attempted to prefer his suit; for he felt that the very pride of a lofty spirit, such as she possessed, would not suffer her to change, if she once gave a denial to his suit. His only hope, he thought, was to win on her affections; for in the midst of her hauteur and occasional fits of coldness, Sir Henry had detected a sensibility the most marked, that would every now and then bid defiance to all the barriers of pride and self-command. And what was more extraordinary than all the rest, there were times when she appeared to be so much aware of this predominant strength of feeling, that she would seemingly give way to it without an effort at control.

At length, after attentive observation, Sir Henry came to the conclusion that she was a woman naturally of the strongest and quickest passions and feelings, but that she was the victim of some deep affliction, which was not of a nature to suffer the approach of the world. Indeed, so far was she from seeking any sympathy with her sufferings, she would have repelled the slightest approach to it, or even the slightest intimation that any cause existed for her requiring it, as an insult to her pride.

With Adela he had a creature of quite another mould to deal with. Beneath that modest and seemingly calm exterior, there lurked a capability of feeling not less strong, but accompanied by a very different disposition from that of her aunt. Deep as were her feelings, Adela was generous as well as impassioned, on all occasions that called those feelings forth.

With her, obedience was scarcely a choice, on a principle of duty it was so natural to her; and any one having authority, were he so disposed, might exercise it over her in the most arbitrary manner, without fear of opposition from the most gentle and passive of her sex.

Though Sir Henry de Pomeroy never failed to remember the warnings of the palmer, yet such recollections recurred to his mind with but feeble effects. The strange threatenings of the palmer were now remembered, in the broad eye of day, and, by a man in love, with a very different feeling to that which they created when they came before him in the midst of darkness and mystery, from one who was himself mysterious; so that they now no more affrighted him than would the shadows raised by the wand of the pretended magicians of the time, in the old halls of the castle. At length they seemed to him to be little other than the wanderings of an uneasy dream; whilst the doubts he entertained respecting the consent of the Lady Alicia being more real, so much engrossed his mind that he could not admit any fears of a merely imaginative nature.

But though love had made Sir Henry, who was naturally of a rash and headstrong character, cautious in approaching the object of his choice; though it had induced him to think slightly of the palmer's warning; and though it had somewhat cooled his ardour for Prince John's concerns, as it excited his energy in his own, it could not do one thing,—it could not induce him to contend with the passion itself for the sake of its object till after the approaching eve of St. John, when a promise had been given that all doubts should be cleared.

But to contend with any passion had never formed a part of the character of this impetuous and self-willed youth. How to secure its success was, therefore, the sole end and aim he had in view; and if he watched with inquisitive eyes the Lady Alicia, with no less anxiety did he watch the most favourable moment for pleading his passion with her lovely niece. At length his ardent looks, though furtive and irregular, alarmed a mind so retiring as hers, and she would blush and droop her head, and

shrink from such impassioned glances with an excess of modesty that he frequently interpreted into coldness towards him ; a thought which added new torture to a soul already on the rack.

Could he have read the heart of Adela, none of these fears would have found a place within his own ; for he had gained for himself a deep interest in her affections. Yet, though her love for him was tender, it was of the most retiring nature, and had in it that captivation which none but the love of a modest character can possess : a love which occasionally rose into animation, even into a timid and half-formed confidence, from its anxious desire to please.

Yet, dear as Henry was to Adela, though her love for him could animate her mind, raise her drooping spirits, modulate to the sweetest accents the tones of her voice ; though it beamed in her eyes, and in a thousand things disclosed the hidden feelings of her heart, yet she had not a thought to cherish such an affection, or to let it grow into hope and expectation, without the full and free consent of her guardian, to whom she was bound by so many ties. But all these feelings of caution and timidity on the one part, and of duty and modesty on the other, could not have the force to keep love chained ; they could not destroy hope ; they could not for ever hold in bondage the inexplicable power of sympathy, which makes the heart that loves, at length, fully understand the bosom that silently responds to its affections.

Had the Lady Alicia been more intimately acquainted with Sir Henry de Pomeroy, she would not long have remained in ignorance as to the real nature of his sentiments towards her ward. Notwithstanding all his caution, his very change of deportment would have told her the truth ; for he was naturally of a temper almost as haughty as her own ; yet love had so wrought upon him, it had done what was little short of a miracle—it had made a proud mind humble enough to doubt its own merits, when there was a probability they might be weighed in opposition to its ardent hopes.

Things could not remain for ever thus nicely balanced



between the parties ; and soon the young people met, as it was natural they should meet under such circumstances, with doubt, and anxiety, but with still increasing love on the part of Sir Henry. On that of the Lady Adela, with a painful consciousness that all was not well with her ; with that flutter of the nerves, that embarrassment which, whilst it suppresses much, frequently betrays more : for whenever any strong feeling has once obtained possession of the heart, it is scarcely possible to prevent its declaring itself.

At length the feelings of Sir Henry became so intense, he could not much longer support a state of so much doubt, and felt that he must take steps to decide at once his fate. Still he delayed, still he feared and hesitated ; till one day, surprised by an occasion which fortune rather than his own endeavours had made propitious to his suit, he found himself alone with Adela, at the side of a small fountain in the midst of the park.

The place, the hour, for it was towards the close of day, the blushing embarrassment of the gentle girl, all were favourable to the interests of that passion which filled his soul ; and without premeditation, without even a pause to consider the consequences that might be the result, and almost without a purpose beyond that of speaking the overflowings of a heart whose feelings could no longer be suppressed, did he declare how deeply, how sincerely, he had loved. Whilst Adela, distressed in mind, shaken in every nerve by the suddenness of the avowal, and too much overcome by her own emotions to struggle against them in a moment of such surprise, could no longer conceal that he too was beloved with a tenderness and sincerity no less than his own.

That hour determined their future fate. Adela had not scrupled, after this explanation of their mutual feelings, to declare all the rest. She very frankly told him that nothing could be done for them, that the result of their affection would be to feel its hopelessness, and to part, unless Sir Henry could devise some plan to win the approbation of her kinswoman ; a thing by no means to be rashly or hastily attempted,

for, as far as she could judge, the Lady Alicia had determined on compelling her to take the veil.

It may well be supposed this conversation had the most serious effects on the mind of Sir Henry de Pomeroy; and before he decided how he should proceed in regard to the Lady Alicia, whose character and demeanour appeared so extraordinary, he resolved to endeavour to learn something more than he already knew about the history of her early life, and for this purpose he adopted the means of which we shall speak in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER XV.

The excuse that thou dost make in this delay,  
Is longer than the tale thou dost excuse;  
Is thy news good or bad? Answer to that;  
Say either, and I'll stay the circumstance.

SHAKSPEARE.

IN situations of doubt, when a danger is at hand that must be fatal to their hopes, men often resort to means to assist them in their efforts to avoid it, which in calmer moments they would reject, as utterly unworthy and altogether to be despised. So was it now with Sir Henry. He feared the Lady Alicia would be resolutely opposed to his hopes; and fancied, if it were possible he could but obtain some knowledge of those painful circumstances that seemed to have wrought so strangely on her character, it would in all probability most materially assist him in knowing how to act for the best on the present occasion, and might, at least, prevent his doing or saying anything that would be likely to irritate or prejudice her already disturbed mind.

It occurred to him, that the nurse who had brought up the Lady Alicia from a child, and had lived with her the greater part of her life, could not but know something of those extraordinary circumstances, with which the world at large was but imperfectly acquainted; for, though all knew there was a great deal that was mysterious about the Lady Alicia, no one pretended to speak except on the ground of vague, impertinent, or improbable conjectures, as to its cause.

Sir Henry had also observed that Patch (who he deemed was no more a fool than he chose to be for his own interest) was fully aware of the influence which this favoured servant had with her mistress, and therefore paid his court to her with sedulous attention. It was with Patch, then, that the young knight condescended to hold a conference. Bribed by a largess (with the promise of a still more considerable recompense did he succeed in the service required at his hands), the fool willingly received from Sir Henry all the necessary instructions ; indeed his curiosity was not a little raised on his own account ; and having soon after made an occasion, that led to his being invited to sip a cup of wine in the nurse's apartment, he availed himself of it to carry forward the purpose he had in view.

"A good-morrow to you, worthy dame," said the fool ; "fine weather this for the hay harvest : the farmers will have a good crop, and the cattle a bellyful. Times to rejoice in these, dame ; the very birds seem to understand it is so, by their chirping and singing, as merrily as if St. Kewen was praying for the laying of their eggs."

"Good lack !" said the nurse ; "and what did he pray for ? Swans' eggs, I trow, a rare dainty."

"No, good dame," replied the fool ; "St. Kewen was an Irish saint, and favoured the laying of eggs in a very different manner ; for one day, when he was praying, holding out his hands at the window of an upper chamber, a pretty little swallow came and laid an egg in one of them ; and such was the patience of the good saint, that he never stirred from his position, till the pretty bird had built her nest, laid all her eggs, and reared her little family. And, no doubt, you know, that saints who favour birds are the especial protectors of noble persons. Our Lady Alicia, for instance, is said to be protected by St. Colombe and his dove—I dare say you remember to have heard, how the doves flew about at the hour of her birth. No doubt you know, likewise, all about her wedding and her

troubles, and her crosses, for such a discreet woman as you are must have been very much trusted."

"Why, yes, to be sure I was," replied Cicely; "and as to remembering my Lady Alicia's birth, alack! I shall never forget it. It fell, of all days in the year, on the eve of the assumption of Our Lady. I was then a young thing, and a comely, and as merry as May; and had for my bachelor, Walter the baker, that was Walter the baker of our household; for I lived with my Lady Alicia's father and mother; and noble Normans were they, seeing that my Lord came, over with Duke William, and fought in the battle of Hastings, and had lands given him, and his name written down in the Battle Abbey roll, and moreover——"

"I understand," said Patch, anxious to cut short this long story, "you lived with them, and according to the Norman custom, you became milk-mother to my Lady Alicia."

"Milk-mother to my Lady Alicia, and I never married in all my life! What may you mean, Master Patch?"

Patch, alarmed lest he should have unwittingly offended, apologised, saying he had forgotten she had never been married; and, no wonder, for he could scarcely believe so comely and discreet a person should have remained single.

"Nor I neither, Master Patch," replied Cicely, completely led back to her good humour; "only that nobody has very lately seemed to think about me; and that's some obstacle to one of our sex. Women can't speak out their minds without blushing, on such matters, unless to a particular friend, and to such a sensible man as you are, Master Patch;" and Dame Cicely fanned herself very gently, and looked very lovingly as she spoke.

"Oh, no fear of your blushing to me, dame!" said Patch; "there's no occasion for it."

"I'm glad to hear you say so," replied she; "and as you are such an honest and sensible youth, and so much my friend, I may tell you what I have saved in my service by the bounty

of my lady, who is a very free giver. I am worth twenty marks in gold; one hundred and ten shillings; one hundred and seventy esterlings; and two hundred and forty pennies Tower weight, five bezants, and nineteen zantines; twelve pieces of household stuff, seven kirtles, and odd furniture both for body and house."

Patch was dumb before this recital of Dame Cicely's wealth, and began to doubt what could all this mean addressed to him? He gave a shrewd guess when she added, looking very tenderly upon him:

"Walter the baker could do nothing with me, though he followed my heels for many a long year. But Walter was not such a proper man as you are, Master Patch; he had not half your sense, though you are a fool. But I have it here," she added, laying her finger on her forehead; "and, as I say, with twenty marks in gold, and a hundred and ten shillings, and a hundred and seventy esterlings, and——"

Patch, perfectly alarmed by this sudden and violent attack upon him, cut short Dame Cicely's enumeration of her wealth, and said very civilly:

"Most excellent and respected Dame Cicely, with all thanks for your good-will, I must tell you, though I am a fool, I am not yet fool enough, nor knave enough either, to bestow my folly, at the suggestion of my roguery, upon such a wise, staid, and worthy person as yourself. And trust me, dame, don't tell every fool you meet how much you are worth; for, maybe, all would not take wit enough in their folly to be honest men, and let it pass free. But let us talk of old times, and of thy mistress, the Lady Alicia;" and then, with a little more cunning flattery and persuasion, Patch brought her round to the mood he most desired. "Thou didst speak of her birth just now," added the fool.

"Ay, marry did I," said Cicely; "well do I remember the day she was born: why, I had the babe in my arms ere it was an hour old, and as fine a child as ever was seen. I was called to my lady by Margery, the bower-woman; it was on the eve

of the Assumption; and a great company were we to have in honour of the day at the castle. And I was busied among the maids, seeing all things put in right order, and giving out the sweetmeats for the cooks, by reason that old Rebecca, who had charge of them, was sick, and I helped Rebecca, for she and I were bedfellows, and had our pittance together, and——”

“But the babe,” said Patch, “what of her?”

“Why, as I said, I had her in my arms before she was an hour old; a finer child never came into this world of sorrow and of care,” replied Cicely; “the very picture of its father; it had its father’s pout with the lip, pretty dear; ay, ’twas as like as one pea is to another; and it cried lustily as soon as it was born. And though its father seemed vexed when he heard that his lady had brought him a little maid, for he would have had a man-child; he wanted an heir male to his lands; yet, he said, he would not murmur at God’s sending, and so, giving me a bezant for bringing him the news, he bade me go my ways, and send to him Master Simon, who was star-wise. Our lord and chief was earnest to know what would be the fortunes of the new-born babe.”

“And did Master Simon predict any of those sad chances that have happened to our Lady Alicia?” said Patch, venturing upon a leading question.

“Why, I can’t say, Master Patch, that ever my lord told me exactly what the astrologer said would be the fortunes of my lady; though I am certain he predicted something; and so I used to think, when all those terrible matters came to pass.”

“Ah, I thought as much,” said Patch; “such things as they were, you know, Dame Cicely, never could have happened without being foretold.”

“To be sure, I thought so, and said so,” replied the nurse; “for, says I, there’s nothing comes to pass without the stars; and so, though I knew nothing of what had been foretold, I considered it as all fulfilled when my poor lady became such a sufferer.”

“My life upon it, you were in the right, dame,” said Patch;

"she could not have met with those singular sufferings and events, you know, without the assistance of astrology."

"Nor could she have met with her husband neither," said the nurse.

"Certainly not," answered Patch.

"And such a husband, too!" exclaimed Cicely; "such a comely, noble, handsome man, as was the Lord de Beaumont, very wild, though, in some of his ways; and folk did say he went up to London town and followed the court, and neglected my poor lady, and left her here in the castle all alone by herself; and she loving him as never before woman loved man—it was enough to make her mazed."

"It was so, indeed," said Patch; "but how know you it was true?"

"Oh! there were those who said so, and said they knew he was false to her, and would swear it upon the four Gospels, with relics put under the books of them: nobody dare take such an oath as that, unless it were true."

"I don't know," said Patch; "the world's very bad, and every day grows worse; there are few honest men now-a-days but what are counted fools, and that's the reason, I believe, that I am accounted one of them."

"Many people are accounted what they are not," said the nurse. "But, as I was a-telling, there were many strange things happened about my lord and my lady, that I could never exactly come at the bottom of. And, somehow or other, my lady mistrusted my curiosity, and fancied I wanted to know more than she chose to tell; and so she took occasion, as you will hear presently, to send me out of the way, just at the time there was, I believe, most to be known."

"No doubt she feared your shrewd wit and observant eye," said Patch, "if there was anything to conceal."

"Ay," replied the old dame, "and that there was something to conceal, nobody shall ever persuade me to the contrary, though I can't exactly guess what it was. But I am sure there was a something; but all I knew was this——"



Patch perked up his ears, listened with the most fixed attention, and prepared to have his curiosity most fully satisfied, when the nurse abruptly said, "What time of the day may it be, think you, Master Patch? for sure 'tis time for me to go wait upon my lady."

"Not so, good dame," replied Patch; "we will not part till I have finished this cup, and you your pleasant story."

"Well then," continued the nurse, "my Lord de Beaumont came home to the castle at last, and brought a dear friend with him, a very great baron, and he and my lord were what is called brothers in arms; and they loved each other like brothers in blood; and so they lived together for some months in the castle; and hunted and hawked, and revelled and tilted, and gave banquets, and nothing was like it. But somehow or other, I soon observed that there was something wrong between my lord and my lady. I could not tell what, for both were very strange; and the friend went away, and my lord soon after him; and both were busied in making preparations for the Holy Land. After they were gone, my lady became more strange and moody than ever; and did not go to mass, nor beyond the domain of the castle; but often went, as 'twas said, to a cell of mortification she had built for herself in the woods, and there she would let no one go with her: till, at last, I thought she looked so ill, and rested so ill, and seemed always in a fright and a flutter, and never smiled, and was so lost in thinking, that if anybody spoke to her, she often did not seem to hear them. Well, at last, I, who had been her nurse from the cradle, took on me to tell her how sorry I was to see her in such a way; and I asked her if anything ailed her that I might know of, and if comfort was not to be had by good counsel. But she treated all I said as nothing but my fancy, and told me she had uneasy thoughts about her lord, who was at that time absent in the Holy Land. And soon after, she told me she was under a vow that would oblige her to travel, as a poor pilgrim, to some of the shrines in Cornwall; and that she was determined to go, and to take with her only

a Norman woman, whom she greatly trusted, as the attendant of her pilgrimage. I was to remain at the castle, have the keys of all the stores, and keep order there till her return."

"And how soon did she come back again?" inquired Patch.

"You shall hear anon," said the nurse: "she almost, as I may say, stole away from her own castle; yet we all knew she was under a vow for the sake of my lord's safety in the holy wars, and was visiting all the shrines for him. Well, away she went, and no tidings came of her. I did my best, and kept the keys, and looked well after the maidens and servitors in her household. At length we grew uneasy at such a silence, and such an absence, and began to fear something had happened; when, all at once, my Lady Alicia came home,—I shall never forget how; it was a thing enough to make one mazed to see it, and to remember it."

"What do you mean?" exclaimed Patch.

"Let me make an end of telling it," said the nurse: "she came home attended by a stranger, quite different to what she went out, with only one bower-woman. And as she dashed over the drawbridge, for she was on horseback, and the bridge had been lowered to let her pass into her own castle, she rode like one who cares not for her own life, or for the neck of the horse. I marvel she was not killed, considering the spirit of the animal she rode, and how she rode him. He reared whilst on the bridge, and I screamed at the sight, for I saw her from a chamber of the gatehouse; and we all thought that she and the horse would have fallen from the drawbridge into the moat below, and be dashed to pieces before our eyes; for the moat was then dry, by reason of the drought; and we all hurried to meet her, and to give her a welcome home in the outer bayle of the castle."

"And then you learnt what had chanced?" said Patch.

"Yes," said Cicely: "never shall I forget it; how she looked!—how she spoke! She was as pale as a corpse, yet there was not a tear in her eye; but I saw the lids move in a

quick, short way; and her lips, that were marble white, trembled like a quivering leaf. She saw that we were all frightened at her looks, and were afraid to speak. She threw the reins upon the neck of the horse, tossed her arms abroad, as if frantic, and looking upward with a wildness in her eyes that made her seem to be something fearful,—something scarcely like a woman,—clasped her hands together, and exclaimed in a voice that made all shudder, with its shrill and piercing tones, ‘Oh, my people! I return to you a widow; your lord, my husband, is dead!—dead! he has fallen in the Holy Land; and I live to tell it! He was slain, not in battle, but by——’ She could add no more! she had hitherto made a great effort to keep in her feelings, but they were too strong for her. She would have dropped from the horse had not so many sprang forward to help her. She was carried senseless into the castle, and there she lay for two months, sick almost to death, and I tended upon her.”

“And after her recovery she went to Normandy, did she not?” inquired Patch.

“Not immediately,” replied Cicely; “she was at first for giving herself up to grief and despair. She dismissed with a largess the person who, it seemed, had met with her on the way when she was returning from her humble pilgrimages, and who, it appeared, was then coming to the castle, to tell her of her lord’s death. She gave herself up to the deepest sadness, took no pleasure in anything, and saw only godly men; yet not even then her usual confessor. She would wander for days together in the woods, or go to her cell, and let no one follow her. At length, a letter came from Normandy, to say that her brother, the Lord de Marmoutier, was ill; and that he wished her to come over to him. My Lady Alicia immediately quitted England; her brother died soon after; and we, her people of this castle, saw no more of her for above sixteen years; for she made pilgrimages, and stayed in Normandy all that while. We heard, however, that the Baron de Marmoutier had left as his heiress an infant daughter, whose mother had

died when she was born. And we heard likewise that our Lady Alicia, by buying the wardship of the king, had become the sole guardian of her deceased brother's orphan, the Lady Adela, with whom she, at last, returned to England."

"Yes," said Patch; "that happened just after the house-steward had shown his good sense in appointing me to be wise man, or monitor, commonly called fool, because fools like children speak the truth, to the family; thinking, no doubt, a pleasant, agreeable, lively person, might help to dispel the megrims, if my lady should happen to bring home any of her old melancholy moods with her from Normandy."

"It is all very true," said the nurse; "he took you as family fool, in the hope to divert her; for though she is not frantic in her fits of grief now, as she used to be when my lord's death was new to her, yet she is sad enough still; and a most constant widow she has been, mourning her lord's death like a bird that has lost its mate. Nobody ever won so much as a smile from her, by way of encouragement, when they wanted to woo her, might he be prince, baron, or knight. Oh! she is a true one, or there be no truth on earth."

"And the Lady Adela, what think you of her, dame?"

"She is very dutiful to her aunt and guardian; and I am sure that my Lady Alicia wants to make a nun of her. And if so, there will be a fine windfall, by way of inheritance, for the religious houses, unless one of them should happen to marry——"

"Which, by your account, nurse, neither of them is likely to do," observed Patch.

"I don't know that," said Cicely; "I have very lately altered my mind in that particular. Have you never observed some things of late?"

"Ay, many things; but what do you mean?" said Patch.

"I have something here," answered the old nurse, touching significantly her forehead, "something which seldom fails me. I have wit truly under the bone, wit to see and to judge, and makes me think my Lady Alicia is mightily changed of

late. Do you mark nothing with that fine young knight, Sir Henry de Pomeroy?"

"Nothing but courtesy," replied Patch.

"Courtesy!" exclaimed the nurse; "a crota's end for such courtesy, say I. Courtesy, forsooth; marry now, to my thinking, it is love!"

"Love!" exclaimed Patch; "love! why, the Lady Alicia is more distant to Sir Henry, and at times shuns him more, than she would a stranger. Call you this love?"

"I do," said the nurse; "'tis the way with us women. We often seem not to affect what we love best. And have you not marked, within these two or three days, how much she is altered to my young lady?"

"How so?" said Patch.

"Why, thus," answered the nurse: "I was coming out of the grange, whither I had been to show Tim the miller, our new bower-maid's father, our stock of corn, when, who should I see gliding down the green alley but Sir Henry de Pomeroy and my young Lady Adela; and she was hanging on his arm, with her eyes bent on the ground, whilst his were seemingly fixed on her face, and he was in earnest discourse with her. They did not see me; and next I saw him take out a rose, that was in her hair, and he kissed it, and put it in his own bosom. And so, thinking no harm, when I returned to the castle, I told what I had seen to my Lady Alicia, and said what I thought it looked like."

"And what said she?" inquired Patch.

"You should rather say, what looked she," replied the nurse; "for, truth to tell, she did not say much. But she looked! I shall never forget how. She looked for all the world as if she had seen a spectre; or rather as if a viper had suddenly come across her or stung her. I thought she would have swooned outright, as she said faintly, 'I never suspected such a thing as this; I thought it improbable, impossible!' 'La! my lady, says I, 'how great folks may be out, when us simple ones are in the right. But who, my lady, could see such a fine young

knight as Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and such a sweet young lady as my Lady Adela, always together, and not suspect them of falling in love? Why, my lady, for them not to do so would be contrary to nature.' 'Contrary to nature!' said my Lady Alicia, repeating my words, and looking so aghast as she stared at me, as if she did not half understand what I had been saying: and I, seeing her surprise, I said—But, Holy Mary protect us! there's her call; she is ringing her handbell for me. Do not say a word about what I have told you to anybody; for I am no gossip, and never talk of these things to anybody but to such a friend as you." And so saying, Nurse Cicely left him in all haste to attend upon her mistress.

## CHAPTER XVI.

Oh, most adored ! oh, most regretted love !  
Oh, joys that never must again be mine !  
And thou, lost hope, farewell ! vainly I rove,  
For never shall I reach that land divine,  
Nor ever shall thy beams celestial shine  
Again upon my sad, unheeded way.

MRS. HENRY TIGHE'S *Psyche*.

THE sudden summons, which broke up the colloquy of Nurse Cicely and Patch, came from the Lady Alicia, who directed the former to seek out forthwith the Lady Adela, and tell her that her aunt required her attendance in her private chamber.

Adela obeyed, and her own consciousness of having done wrong, in allowing the declaration and returning the affection of Sir Henry without her guardian's approval, made her detect at a glance, on coming into her presence, that she was summoned by the Lady Alicia to receive some admonition respecting the very subject that was uppermost in her thoughts. She trembled, and with some difficulty made her way to a seat that her aunt pointed out to her ; there she sat in profound silence, not daring to look up to meet her guardian's eye ; but hung down her head, and played with the end of one of the long plaits of her hair, that fell in front over her bosom.

The scene which followed was extraordinary ; for, though obedient, submissive, gentle even to timidity, and of the

humblest spirit, Adela loved Henry ; and, notwithstanding her deep convictions of duty, she was too young to be wholly insensible to the charm which, more or less, will ever attach itself to forbidden love. But, although alarmed, and almost confounded, by a summons so unexpected, there was such a character of ingenuousness, of simplicity, in Adela, that no circumstance could conquer her natural disposition to speak frankly the feelings of her heart. It was not, therefore, how to avoid the avowal of the truth, but how to speak it so as least to offend her guardian, that now occupied her thoughts. In every other respect she was too guileless to think at all about the manner of acknowledging her affections ; she only felt timid, ashamed, as very young persons are apt to do, as if she had done wrong in loving at all ; whilst to make the acknowledgment before one who, calm from want of sympathy, might listen to it with indifference, appeared to her as something fearful.

To add to her embarrassment at this moment, it struck her, as her eye glanced on her guardian, there was something very remarkable in her countenance and demeanour. The Lady Alicia sat somewhat stiffly in her chair ; the most perfect self-possession and composure were apparent in the air and manner with which she spoke but a few words, as Adela took her seat. Yet there was a something ; Adela could not exactly have defined in what it consisted, which convinced her that all this was the result of a strong resolution, taken up on a high ground, with a determination not to flinch from its object, though it was one likely to be of painful interest to both.

“ Adela,” the Lady Alicia commenced, and then made that short pause which becomes emphatic when a conversation of moment is about to ensue ; “ Adela,” she repeated, “ it has been communicated to me,—it matters not by whom,—that you have allowed an approach to an intimacy, the object of which cannot be mistaken, on the part of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, without my sanction ; certainly without my suspicion. I ask you if this be true ? ”



Adela burst into tears ; she could not utter one word in reply, but continued to weep, and to wipe her eyes with the end of her veil.

"You do not deny it then," said the Lady Alicia ; "for I cannot but interpret this silence as an admission that I have been told the truth. You are not aware of the vortex of misery into which you would plunge, did you meditate a union with Sir Henry de Pomeroy. But it is my duty to save you from it, and that I shall perform, whatever it may cost me. I had other and higher views for you, Adela, and not even your own folly shall disappoint them : I therefore demand a promise from you, that you will see Sir Henry no more,—think of him no more,—love him no more."

"Oh, my dear and honoured guardian," exclaimed Adela, "think what it is you ask of me ! Could I obey you, you should not need to repeat your commands. See him no more ! Alas ! wherefore ? He is good and noble ; even you have spoken his praises as warmly as he deserves. See him no more !—yet even that I might do,—but to think of him no more, love him no more, that I could never, never do—since, I fear,—I——" She sobbed so much she could not continue speaking.

"This is but the weakness of a girl's love," said the Lady Alicia. "It will give place to time and discipline. I shall send you away from Wilsworthy ; absence and good counsel will do all that is required ; and in a few months, nay, in a few weeks, you will think no more of this foolish affection. It will yield to time."

"Yield to time !" exclaimed the enthusiastic Adela. "Time may change many things, but it will never change my heart. I thought the good never altered when they loved those who were good ; I thought that all just affections were enduring, and that to change was disgraceful—the first step to dishonour."

Adela's voice faltered with emotion ; she looked up—her eyes met those of her aunt—a strange sympathy appeared to be awakened by this encounter of looks. Each seemed to read the

mind of the other; both became confused. The words which hung on the lips of Adela died away in accents too low to meet the ear; and Lady Alicia answered only by her eloquent looks and disordered gestures. The moment was a crisis; she became white as monumental marble, trembled, breathed a short breath or two, then made an effort to speak, but no word followed, as if the blood which had forsaken her cheeks had been driven back upon the heart by the sudden impulse of fear; again, however, it rushed in a full tide from its retreat, and overspread her face and neck with deep blushes; whilst maintaining a spirit too lofty to tolerate the idea that anything Adela had uttered should even seem to give a sudden pang to her bosom, she glanced her eye proudly upon her niece, and said, "Foolish girl! the sight of your distress shakes even my firmness; but it must not be. I will neither yield to pity nor to remonstrance. You must give up this folly; conquer this foolish affection."

Deeply as Adela was interested for herself at this moment, the singular appearance and demeanour of the Lady Alicia awoke, even in her young and inexperienced mind, a train of thought in which she had never before indulged. Long as she had lived with her guardian, and much as she knew of her eccentric character and habits, the idea had never before struck her, which now rushed upon her mind so confusedly that it surprised and almost overpowered her. Could all the sufferings, the eccentricity, the strange mode of life, the faults, the very virtues of her guardian, could they be the result of secret sin—of deep and undying remorse?

The suspicion was an extraordinary one for a girl so young, so innocent, to admit; but, if true or false, it rushed upon her in a manner that was to herself almost unaccountable. She was aware that nothing could be more obvious to those who lived with the Lady Alicia, and indeed it was generally known that she was a most unhappy woman; in this respect there was no discovery to be made: but the cause of that unhappiness was a very different thing, and a young and artless

mind, such as Adela possessed, unaccustomed to the world, and the petty motives which will sometimes excite the deepest passions, was more likely to be struck at once with the sight of the genuine emotions of an alarmed conscience, than would be one who is more versed in observing the complicated circumstances of the world. Again did she ask herself the question—could any such alarm of conscience be the cause of what she had just witnessed?

These thoughts, however, were but momentary, and they speedily passed away. Yet so far was she from feeling discouraged, that the newly awakened impulse gave her a painful interest in the conversation that followed, independent of herself, such as she had never before experienced. And this feeling called up in Adela a degree of courage that will sometimes be found to assert itself in timid characters, when raised above their ordinary emotions by the influence of the circumstances in which they are engaged.

With an earnestness therefore that surprised even herself, she pleaded boldly before her guardian, in behalf of Sir Henry, his high birth, his honourable distinctions, his affections; and asked on what grounds, as her guardian, the Lady Alicia could object to her receiving his suit.

Lady Alicia paused for a few moments to recover herself, and then stated some general objections, but none to the purpose; none such as Adela could consider at all satisfactory or conclusive. She still, therefore, entreated her kinswoman to state more specifically her reasons for insisting on the dismissal of so noble a suitor. Such a persistence on the part of the usually timid Adela, and her aunt's unsatisfactory replies, at length became so painful, that their further conversation was embarrassing to each. In this discussion, however, Adela possessed that advantage, which could not fail to make itself felt, of having told her secret in a plain though bashful manner—she had nothing to hide; and as her object was direct and avowed, her language was ready and simple; till, roused into further contest, it soon became emphatic from the

sincerity of those feelings that gave her courage to maintain her cause.

With Lady Alicia it was quite different. She had not been in any respect candid; she had kept something in reserve, so that she could not support her part in the conference with equal promptness and ease. She frequently contradicted herself, and often marred what she would say, by the very fear she might say too little or too much. At length the pertinacity of Adela compelled her to adopt another line of conduct; and seeing she would not be satisfied without some reason stronger than those already given, she told her plainly she had objections to Sir Henry de Pomeroy that were insurmountable, though of a nature she could not wish to communicate to her niece. Adela must consequently be satisfied with her assurance that they were so.

Thus, the unhappy girl had no resource but to appeal to her aunt's compassion, that she might not be compelled to renounce a hope, on which she avowed all her future happiness must depend, whilst the reason for compelling that renunciation was withheld from her knowledge.

For a moment Lady Alicia seemed to fluctuate between an intention to withdraw and leave her niece to herself, or to remain and speak to her more openly than she had hitherto done. She adopted the last resolution; yet not without an effort. She rose, took two or three turns about the room, gave a glance at Adela, as if she would read her inmost thoughts, and then placing her hand on her brow, stopped, closed her eyes, and for a moment appeared to be absorbed in the intensity of her own reflections. A shudder seemed to come over her whole frame, as suddenly starting from her position, she came up to Adela, took her hand, pressed it vehemently, and with a countenance that, as an index to the mind within, bore the fearful characters of impassioned feelings, she thus addressed her:—

“Oh, urge me not,—do not ask me to speak it,—do not drive me on that rock, or we are both lost. Believe me I speak

truth,—believe me that I, who seem to destroy your hopes, would, with life itself, secure your happiness. But oh ! think not of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, or you are undone. Misery, ruin, death, nay, worse than death, would be the consequence of such a union. Think of him no more,—speak of him no more ; he can never be yours. You must never meet again.”

Adela, though at the first overcome by an alarming sense of surprise, now endeavoured to utter a few words ; but the Lady Alicia would not permit her to speak ; and looking upward with an expression that had in it something appalling, she called on heaven to witness her resolution that Henry de Pomeroy and Adela de Marmoutier should never meet again. There was in the manner in which she expressed this resolution an energy of looks, words, and gestures, that would not admit dispute.

Then, as if fearful to trust her own resolution to continue a conversation of so much interest, she suddenly broke off, retired, and left Adela to her own sad thoughts.

## CHAPTER XVII.

My innocence  
Shall stand triumphant, and your malice serve  
But for a trumpet to proclaim my conquest :  
Nor shall you, though you do the worst fate can,  
Triumph over him whom innocence protects.

MASSINGER.

It was in the abbey church of Tavistock that the cellarer was to submit himself to the judgment of heaven, in the charge which had been brought against him concerning Grace Bolt.

The ordeal in question, a common one with the monasteries in Brother Thomas's day, was not to be held without due solemnity ; the preparations for it in the church had for some time been going on, and the assembly expected to witness the ceremony was likely to be numerous.

There was a simplicity in the abbey church at this time, which rendered the grandeur of its proportions even yet more imposing. The clustering columns, the gorgeously decorated altars, illumined with a thousand tapers burning bright ; the glow of its windows, the coloured light streaming through them on shrines richly jewelled, and decorated with the most gorgeous ornaments and reliquaries ; the capitals of the columns, grotesque in their carvings, consisting of men, animals, and chimeras, were all of a striking character, and of boundless variety in their execution and design. The magnificent rood in the centre of the nave, rose towards the vaulted roof, above every other image, cross, or emblem of the Romish faith. The tombs and

monuments were also striking. The sculptured figures and characteristic effigies of saints, abbots, princes, and warriors, were, for the most part, carved with such exquisite art, that they seemed to give life and animation to alabaster, brass, or stone. Indeed, all within the building was of interest. And the long aisles, with their diversity of light and shade, had in them that air of mystery so calculated to touch the fancy, and to create feelings of awe, as the eye endeavours to trace distinctly, amid their sacred gloom, many an object which seems to pass before it undefined.

The rites of an ancient superstition, when performed in such a place, had in them a spell that was potent. Here the terrors of the ordeal rose before the mind invested with all the power of an offended justice, ready to launch its thunders on the head of the offender. Here the worst fears frequently overpowered the imagination of the sufferer, as they seemed to his disordered senses to be the whispers of the unseen spirits that hovered near.

Our worthy cellarer, as we have already seen, had availed himself, on permission, of my Lord Abbot's own cheese for the matter of the ordeal. Truth to tell, Brother Thomas was much too prudent to choose any such product of the dairies of Devon, on which to risk the test of his honesty; famed as those dairies were, and still are, notwithstanding the excellence of their cream, for producing cheeses as dry and as hard as a stone wall.

At an early hour the multitude pressed to the church; and its long aisles and gorgeous altars presented a scene the most varied and amusing. Whilst the people began to assemble within its walls, the priests were going through some early service, in a manner that partook too much of haste to be devotional; whilst many of the brothers were busy whispering together, or nodding, or looking about, or hearing the news; in short, doing anything but paying attention to the hastily said matins. Novices were seen setting up and lighting great wax tapers; banners were unfurling, and an immense piece of

tapestry was unrolling, to be suspended from column to column down the centre aisle.

As to the people, there was no end to the motley throng, or the improprieties of their behaviour. It seemed as if they were come to witness some piece of buffoonery, or the freaks of a jongleur, instead of the ceremonies of an ordeal so solemn.

Amongst the peasantry assembled, and assembling, were many farmers, yeomen, and bordarii; even ploughmen, serfs, and villains joined the throng. These talked of their cattle, their oats, corn, and hay, just as they would at a market. And two or three huntsmen came in, with their dogs' leashes in hand, instead of their beads, and their hounds at their heels; and these latter intruders, when one of the singing boys attempted to turn them out, began barking and snapping, and opened a matins that startled the old women, who occupied their favourite and accustomed station round the pulpit stairs. Some knights and nobly born youths strolled carelessly in; one of them whistling, and bearing, like the rest, his falcon or sparrowhawk on the fist, as the right of nobility; and those of a lower grade, who wished to ape the manners of the higher orders, and yet dared not violate the laws by carrying a hawk, as a piece of affectation carried on their wrists a cuckoo, whose wings had been cut, and "paraded their fopperies," even before the very altars of the church.

Though there was all this disturbance, the lateral chapels and altars dedicated to the saints were not deserted. Many a silver-haired old man, and many a good old woman, with their beads in their hands, were seen kneeling, sometimes in a company before an image, saying an *Ave Maria* or a *Pater Noster*, in a sort of low humming tone, like bees in a hive.

At length the hour arrived for the high ceremonial of the day; and the abbot appeared, attended by his chaplains, pages, and the vestiarius: he was attired in the alb, robes, and cope; the jewelled gloves and the ring were on his hands; on his head he wore the small mitre, and bore the crosier himself. As soon as he was robed, the bells struck up a peal, and, immediately after, he entered the church. The prior and precentors



followed their superior, also attired in their robes of state. Baldwin with a dignified step, advanced up the nave; Cædmon, the Saxon, bore his train, and all present threw themselves on their knees as he passed, not attempting to rise till he was seated in his stall. Soon after the bells ceased, the abbot rose and began the service of the day with the *Deus in adjutorium*, and after the chanting of many psalms, at the commencement of the *Magnificat*, Baldwin put incense into a silver censer, and the prior and chaplains assisting, proceeded to the high altar, where the bread and cheese were laid out, and according to the custom of the time, blessed it for the ordeal.

And now appeared on the stage the chief actor in the scene, upon whom all eyes were turned: Brother Thomas, the cellarer, dressed in his plain monk's hood and gown. He advanced with a cheerful air, nothing doubtful nor dismayed, supported, like the lion and griffin of a coat of arms, by the stout sub-prior on the one hand, and the shrewd sacrist on the other. Sir Simon, the curate, his accuser, following, supported by a couple of secular priests.

Brother Thomas proceeded to kneel down before my Lord Abbot, who, whilst the prior held the silver plate with the bread and cheese in his hand, prayed over it to the effect, that if Brother Thomas was guiltless of the thing laid to his charge, heaven would make his innocence apparent in the face of all that assembly, of "churchmen and laymen, men and angels." He then presented to Brother Thomas the sacred dish. The cellarer very readily received the piece of cheese, and a small portion of wassail-bread, newly baked, that it might not be dry and stick in his throat, so as in anywise to interfere with the judgment of heaven.

But highly as the expectations of all present had been raised, the ceremony they were so anxious to witness was one of very short duration, having, like a ship-launch, most, if not all its interest, in the bustle, the preparation, the excitement of the day, and the animating spectacle of such a body of people collected together, all under one exhilarating impulse. Brother Thomas went about it leisurely. He stood right

facing my Lord Abbot, near the altar; there he opened a mouth that was none of the smallest, deposited therein the grateful provender, and swallowed it down as smoothly as if it had been no more than pure cream. Heaven had done its part; Brother Thomas had been triumphantly carried through his ordeal, for not even a hem or a cough had interrupted the perfect ease with which it was performed; and being first embraced by the abbot, prior, and sub-prior, with most hearty affection, the former presented him to the whole assembly, and with the acquittal of heaven, gave him the benediction of the church.

Then rose the Latin chant, and the deep and swelling notes of the organ burst upon the ear of the assembled multitude with the finest effect; the abbot gave the general benediction, and the congregation dispersed. Sir Simon, the curate, stole away, disappointed and crestfallen, but cherishing a little store of anger, which he intended should meet with the interest of increase, against Brother Thomas, for another and a surer day. The worthy cellarer was accompanied, in a sort of triumph, back to the common hall of the monastery, by the good-humoured and most satisfied monks, and all was joyous commotion both within and without its walls.

Abbot Baldwin alone lingered in the church; he frequently did so after service, to discuss matters of business with the claustral prior. On this day it so chanced that he continued much longer than usual in conference with him and the vestiarius; and, as it was the duty of the abbot to sit, two or three times a week, in the cloisters, to hear the confessions of the monks, who there approached him for the purpose of disburthening their souls of their secret sins, our abbot was about to take his seat in compliance with this duty before he returned to his own apartment. But as he was passing down one of the aisles to quit the church, so singular an event occurred, and of so much importance to our history, that we must mention the circumstances at large that brought it about, and therefore give them a place in another chapter.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

Dark and unearthly is the scowl  
That glares beneath his dusky cowl;  
The flash of that dilating eye  
Reveals too much of times gone by.

BYRON.

IN one of the lateral chapels of the abbey church, lighted only by a painted window of such deep hues that the rays which stole through it were insufficient to dispel the gloom that hung around, there stood, above an altar-table, the image of St. Mary Magdalen, plainly attired, and crowned with cypress and yew. Large beads formed of glass, to represent tears, were seen upon her cheeks, a human skull was at her feet, and her altar was decorated with rosemary and bay, and all such evergreens as were held sacred to sorrow, penitence, and death. In this chapel there was a confessional, with a number of hair-shirts, crowns of cypress and thorn, disciplines, palm-branches, and tokens, the offerings of a vast variety of penitents who had here distinguished themselves by the severe penances to which they had submitted in expiation of their sins. The chapel was known by the name of the *Dolorosa*, as well as by that of the Magdalen.

At the foot of the altar, and before this image of penitence, after the multitude had retired from the church, there kneeled, wrapped in a plain and dark volupure, with every outward mark of the deepest humiliation, the Lady Alicia de Beaumont.

Her hands were clasped together, her head raised, and her eyes, dimmed with tears, were fixed on the image of grief and misery that was before her, as she devoutly repeated a part of the ritual more especially chosen for occasions of penitence and prostration.

While she thus kneeled, the Lady Alicia was disturbed in her devotions by hearing a long and heavy sigh that seemed to be drawn from some bosom near her. She looked round, and to her surprise observed, close to the Gothic screen (which was covered by a curtain, and separated the small enclosure from the body of the church), a tall figure, dressed in the habit of a palmer. Seeing that he bore with him his bourbon and a withered branch of palm, she immediately understood that he was come hither, in fulfilment of a vow, to offer these emblems at the altar of penitence, on his safe return from the Holy Land.

She could not distinctly see his head, for he wore his cowl forward, and his gown so close about the lower part of his face, that scarcely was there anything to be seen but a long and silvered beard, and a portion of the cheeks and mouth.

The lady felt disturbed at his presence, yet wherefore she could scarcely tell; there was nothing remarkable in the sight of such a person, at such a place. But the cause of her disturbance arose from her own thoughts. She had been engaged in that intense contemplation of the past, in that state of feeling which preoccupies, but does not calm the mind, when outward things become visionary, and inward ones alone real. In that painful calling up of the past, how does the iron enter into the soul of the penitent! Deep, therefore, and tumultuous as had been the emotions of the Lady Alicia, she was naturally disturbed by the presence of a stranger; and she trembled in every limb as she arose to give place to this new comer at the shrine.

"Stay, lady," said the palmer, addressing her; "let me not disturb your devotions; I come but to make my offering: I will straight retire." So saying, with a reverent air, he

placed his bourbon and palm upon the altar-table, knelt before the image, and remained for a few minutes in silent prayer. He then turned again to the Lady Alicia, and said : "Go not, lady ; I would speak with you ere we part. Maybe, I would ask somewhat of you."

"If an alms," replied the Lady Alicia, "for the sake of the holy places the poor palmer has traversed sea and land to visit in Syria, take this, pilgrim !" She took from an almonier, that hung at her girdle, a piece of coin and offered it to his acceptance.

"Keep your guerdon, lady," said the palmer ; "it is neither silver nor gold that I would ask of you : but, perhaps, something more precious—as I would hope to find in you a gentle spirit, willing to receive truth, and to act upon its dictates."

Astonished at a preface like this, the Lady Alicia, nevertheless, signified her willingness to hear whatever the palmer might wish to impart ; and added, with reverence : "And from you, father, I would crave a blessing, and some tidings of that land which has been so fatal to many a widowed heart in England ; where its dearest and its best have perished on those burning and desert sands, or before the walls of strong cities. You have, perhaps, travelled as far as Jerusalem ?"

"Yes," replied the palmer ; "I have visited the holy city, and the blessed sepulchre, for whose deliverance every true knight is sworn to shed the last drop of his blood. Yes, I have wept over that captive Jerusalem, from whose melancholy towers no sound is now heard but the rude clarions of the infidel. I have wandered amid the mountain solitudes of Judea, where all lies under the curse of an offended justice ; I have passed cities, like Babylon of old, that now lie fallen and in the dust, where the screaming vulture and the hissing snake, the wild bird of the air and the wild beast of the forest, seek their home ; where not a human creature makes his abode ; where all is rent and torn asunder, even as an open tomb, as if the last dread trump had rang its peal, and all were risen to the judgment."

"To the judgment!" repeated the Lady Alicia, as if the word had struck upon some chord of deep feeling within her bosom, and called up a sense of unutterable awe.

"Ay, to the judgment," said the palmer, who observed her agitation, in a voice indicating a degree of emotion little inferior to her own; "does the thought of it shake you?"

"Who may abide it!" exclaimed the Lady Alicia, greatly moved.

"The innocent, the pure in heart," replied the palmer vehemently.

"And who are they? where are they to be found?" said the Lady Alicia, in increased agitation.

"Here," cried the palmer; "here, at the foot of the cross!" He seized her hand as he spoke, and led her towards the image of it, that stood on the altar-table.

"Oh! Saints of heaven!" she exclaimed; "and who—who are you—who can thus by a word penetrate the inmost recesses of my soul? and yet your manner speaks to my heart more than your words. You seem to know, holy man, that I am borne down to the earth by unutterable sufferings—sufferings beyond all human aid."

"Give scope to thy penitence, lady," said the palmer; "you have need to express it in tears of blood, could your heart shed such drops as you have caused to flow from other bosoms than your own."

At the hearing of these words the Lady Alicia became deadly pale, her lips quivered with emotion, she clasped her hands together, and said in a low, short, and emphatic tone: "Tell me, who are you? do you know me? do you know aught of my most unhappy life? Speak, I conjure you, speak!"

"Ay, I will speak," he answered, "though it be but as the echo to thy accusing conscience: Alicia de Beaumont, I will not spare you. We spoke but now of the Holy Land. There was one who died there, who was once dear to you—have you forgotten the eve of St. John?"

"You do know me then," she cried in a low and thrilling voice, that was subdued in its tones by the very agony of her fears. Such a tone was like the whisper of the dying—it chilled the heart as it met the ear.

"Ay, Lady," said the palmer; "I do know thee; few so well. Thy conscience tells thee that I speak truth. What I have to impart will touch it to the quick. It will call forth all thy fortitude, all thy resolution, to repair, as far as thou canst repair, at this the last hour open to thee for reparation, the evil, the misery, thou hast wrought."

"Father of Mercy support me at this hour!" exclaimed the Lady Alicia; "what is it I must do? Thy words are death to me. Holy palmer, spare me—oh, spare me!"

"The wounds I give are hurts that heal," said the palmer; "I wound but to cure, not to aggravate thy sorrows. But the call of justice, too, must be heard; justice that long has slumbered, but now has awakened in all her strength. Turn then her wrath aside; obey what she demands, and fear not."

"Speak—tell me what I am required to do," said the Lady Alicia; "and if—yet once more I conjure you, tell me who are you?—you, who address me in a tone and manner that implies menace as well as accusation? There is an authority, like truth, which gives power to your words, or I had never thus submitted to hold question with thee."

"It is not my words that shake thee, or that could have the power to touch thee, Lady Alicia de Beaumont," said the palmer, "did not the heart within that bosom confirm their truth. It is thy conscience that speaks to thee."

"My conscience!" said the Lady Alicia; her pride somewhat roused by these reiterated reproaches.

"Ay, thy conscience!—the echo of God's voice," replied the palmer.

"It is—it is," exclaimed the Lady Alicia, as clasping her hands together, she fell at the pilgrim's feet, and added, in accents that spoke her total incapacity to struggle longer with the sudden and powerful emotions to which his words had

given birth,—“Say on ; I will do all that may be required of me.—Yet but satisfy me in this, how am I thus known to you ?”

“Oh ! ask it not, require it not, lady, at least not now.—How are you thus known to me ? Lady, your heart was once tender, warm, and true, as youth and woman’s love could make it. All things good and holy were around you ; and your father’s aged honours were upheld and adorned by you. Soon after you were married, to one who loved you as never man loved woman—you were the sweetest bride that heaven ever looked upon. So sweet, you made an Eden around you, in your wedded love. And, as in an Eden, the great enemy of mankind looked on and envied : misery followed,—need I tell its tale ?”

“Speak no more of the past ; no more, unless you would see me fall dead at your feet,” said the Lady Alicia : “you have riven my heart. I am satisfied ; you know, indeed, the truth. There needs no other evidence. Proceed then to the matter, to which all this is but as the opening of a fearful page. Let me have all it may contain. I am prepared to meet it.”

“Know it then at a word,” replied the palmer : “one whom you would most fear to meet, and yet, maybe, would most desire to see, still lives. The hour approaches when he will appear before you, even as one who comes armed with a higher authority than that of man, to do right to an injured honour and a blighted name. The hour approaches, but is not yet come.—You tremble, lady ; you are faint. Shall I pause ? shall I go on ?—you cannot bear it.”

“Speak, speak on,” she said ; “I have already borne so much this day, I will not shrink from what may yet remain of bitterness. I can, in part, conjecture to what all this tends.—Holy palmer, you would speak of the Lady Adela de Marmoutier. Have I read your thought ?”

“You have,” replied the palmer ; “it is of her that I would speak. She is sought in marriage by Sir Henry de Pomeroy, the gallant son of the late Lord de Pomeroy. Is it not so, lady ?”

This last question was put in a tone that implied some degree of bitter and passionate feeling in the mind of the speaker.



"I know well," she replied, "that Sir Henry de Pomeroy has presumed to entertain an affection for my ward ; but I have forbidden it : on that head there is nothing to fear ; for the Lady Adela cannot wed without my consent ; and that will never be given. I shall prevent such a union."

"You prevent it !" said the palmer, in a tone of irony ; "you prevent a woman, young, fair, and frail, from following the dictates of her own strong and perverse will ! What law, think you, can bind the rebel heart of woman ?—can hold within its confines her wandering will ? or bid her spirit, calm and unruffled, follow in the path of duty, when passion visits it with its tumultuous force,—tears down the barriers of a righteous obligation, and bids it bound forward in its full career of ruin and destruction ? Are you, lady, possessed of such a power to govern the human will at pleasure, that you talk thus confidently of making any law of duty imperative with the Lady Adela, when youth and love are prepared to play the traitor ?"

"Adela would not, I am persuaded," said the Lady Alicia, "disobey me in this. She knows well the danger, the penalties she must incur for such offence."

"The very knowledge of that danger, the very sacrifice she would be called upon to make, would but make her love so much the more eager," said the palmer. "Lady, ask me not how I have learnt it ; but confide in the truth of my assertion—Sir Henry de Pomeroy, urged on by the vehemence of passion for the Lady Adela, and in despair to obtain her by your consent, has laid a plan to bear her from you by stealth. Unless you are resolute, no power on earth can prevent her union with Sir Henry."

"That union would be worse than death," said the Lady Alicia ; "it would be misery such as my very blood recoils but to think upon. Tell me how this can be prevented : instruct me,—I will delay neither time nor means to thwart it, nor scruple at anything rather than Sir Henry de Pomeroy and Adela de Marmoutier should meet again, as they have hitherto met, in secret affection. Tell me what to do ?"

"Dedicate Adela as the bride of heaven," said the palmer. "But in order to do this with the certainty of success, you must make a sacrifice. Can you,—dare you submit yourself to pain? to pain such as no nice scruples may spare you. Ask your own heart what it dare do, and then listen to what must be done."

"It were sin, a deep and deadly sin, to suffer this matter to go forward: to prevent the worst evil, I can and dare do much."

"Ay," said the palmer, "but dare you do thus much,—reveal the truth to one whom I shall name, and who can alone prevent a union that would be so fatal? You have pride, Lady Alicia; can you humble that?"

"What new sacrifice, what new humiliation, must now be required of me, who have already drunk of the cup of mortification, of sorrow, to its last dregs? Is the sacrifice of my life now required? Is that your aim?"

"God gave the spark of life," said the palmer; "man must not put it out. Listen: it shall be briefly told. Baldwin, that wily abbot, is leagued with the enemies of Richard. He it is who first proposed and has urged on this rash suit of Sir Henry de Pomeroy. You must confide the truth to Abbot Baldwin. You shudder. But remember, the seal of confession is sacred: fear not then to avow to him, as a churchman, the whole truth; and with him you must contrive the means (he will not be slack to find them) to remove the Lady Adela to some convent of a holy sisterhood of nuns, where she may forthwith enter on the term of her noviciate; and ere the time arrives that she shall be vowed as a nun, all the danger of a union with Sir Henry de Pomeroy will be overpast. Dare you do this, as the last, the only means for safety?"

"I will do it," replied the Lady Alicia, in a firm voice; "but oh! at what a price! Not to such a man as Baldwin would I have this matter known. Is there no other way?"

"None," said the palmer. "Abbot Baldwin and Sir Henry

de Pomeroy, by the success of their plans, have all the West at their command. Sir Henry de Pomeroy you will not meet again till it is too late. It is to Baldwin, therefore, the truth must be made known, and by you, for by no other evidence can it be established: heaven demands this sacrifice of you, and by you it must be made."

"I will speak to him," said the Lady Alicia, "though to meet death itself would be more welcome. But oh! not thus can I part from you, holy palmer; from you, who have wrung my very heart with the bitterness of your reproaches. Tell me who you are; do not leave me thus unsatisfied; this broken and sad heart has convinced you it may not resist the power of truth. Fear not then to trust it. Tell me who you are; and that you will pray for the unhappy penitent who now craves your prayers."

The palmer turned from her, yet not angrily; he seemed deeply touched by her words. She thus continued to address him: "Let me but see your face ere you depart; for as it is, you have come before me like a shadow of the night, that visits the care-worn mind in the visions of a feverish dream. You have called up fearful recollections; you have named the fatal eve of St. John; you have struck the iron deep into my soul; and yet I know you not! Leave me not thus; say but a word; let me but look upon your features."

She caught him by the gown, and in the vehemence of her feelings, threw herself on her knees before him. He made an effort to extricate his gown from her grasp; in doing so his dress was discomposed, and his cowl fell somewhat back. She caught a hasty view of his face, so imperfect, from the sombre light and gloom of the chapel, that the features could not be distinctly seen. Yet imperfectly as it was seen, there was an expression in the countenance that struck to the heart the Lady Alicia as she thus glanced upon it with an eye of timidity and fear.

The palmer seemed displeased with the manner in which she had so pertinaciously endeavoured to discover who he

was. There was a sternness in his eye, a peculiar character in its expression, that conveyed to his pale features and to his haughty brow something terrible, which combined with the resemblance she fancied in the face of the palmer to one who was at that moment in her thoughts, altogether so shocked, so overpowered her, that as he suddenly rushed from the chapel, she screamed aloud and fell with her face on the pavement at the altar's foot.

On coming to herself, she found she had been assisted by Abbot Baldwin and the claustral prior, who had heard her piercing cry, as they were passing near the little chapel in their way to quit the church. They had hastened to the spot, where they found her alone and senseless; and not doubting but that the severity of some penance had reduced her to such a state, they threw some of the holy water from the piscina that was at hand in her face; the abbot pronouncing a blessing as he did so.

Soon after she came to herself; she trembled greatly, and as they raised her, ere she could utter a word, she looked fearfully and hurriedly around, as if her eye sought something, some object of terror, that lurked near her. Baldwin and the prior duly attributed this to the confusion resulting from her yet disordered senses. But they judged wrong; she was perfectly restored to her recollection; and seeing that the palmer was gone, she had self-possession sufficient not to betray the cause of her late distress. She inquired timidly if they had seen any one pass out of the church; to which receiving a negative in reply, she said no more on the subject; but prayed the Lord Abbot to give her the opportunity, so favourable to her spiritual condition, to make her confession to him, in the chapel of St. Mary the Magdalen. The abbot signified his consent, and the claustral prior, taking the hint, withdrew.

## CHAPTER XIX.

'Tis ever thus  
With noble minds, if chance they slide to folly :  
Remorse stings deeper, and relentless conscience  
Pours more of gall into the bitter cup  
Of their severe repentance.

MASON.

CONVINCED, as fully as the palmer had desired she should be, of the necessity of removing Adela beyond the reach of any attempts of Sir Henry de Pomeroy to secure her person, the Lady Alicia did not for a moment draw back from the painful communication she had been advised to make to the abbot. The difficulty was, how to make it.

She knew well that in Baldwin she had to deal with a man, who, though he could occasionally for his own purposes play the courtier, was in the main of a haughty and repulsive character. She knew also that, in order to obtain his concurrence in preventing the dreaded marriage, she must adopt a line of conduct, from which even the most worthy feel a shrinking—she must expose to an ungenerous mind the secret faults and errors of a soul that was originally more noble than itself. Another thing, likewise, added to her embarrassment: the Lady Alicia, though she had always proudly resisted whatever might expose her to the direct censure of the world, had not, as we have seen in her interview with the palmer, a hardened heart; she was now, therefore, racked by two very opposite emotions, a keen sense of personal pride which holds the least

approach to a familiarity that would trench upon her confidence at a distance, and a desire, nevertheless, so far to maintain an ingenuousness that was natural to her, as to avoid playing the hypocrite.

The complicated feelings of which we speak had often caused her conduct and her manner to appear eccentric to those with whom she only casually associated, who knew not the hidden springs and motives of her actions, and that she bore within her mind an ever-rankling wound. The cause of this sorrow was ever present to her thoughts, and she applied to it, therefore, even the remotest or most casual observation that fell from the lips of another in discourse ; and, by so doing, frequently presented her bosom to meet the shaft which would otherwise have had neither aim nor power to reach her. Such were the daily suspicions of one so keenly susceptible to the value of an earthly fame, that not even her penitence to heaven could give her that calm indifference towards the world, that is numbered among the many blessings attendant on a humble and contrite heart. But hers was rather a tortured than a humbled mind ; for even at this moment she endeavoured to rally her spirits, and on the very eve of self-accusation and of shame, she was gathering around her heart those defences of a stubborn resolution, that would render her very confession a proud one—a confession of general human frailty, rather than of individual guilt ; the yielding of one proud spirit to another, which mingles a sort of defiance with its very submission. How different from the temper of mind in which she had met the admonitions of the palmer ! But in him she had been touched and subdued by the energy of a lofty spirit, and the unsparing sincerity of an honest purpose.

Baldwin, who had long entertained some deep-laid schemes, by which he was desirous to obtain certain advantages from his acquaintance with the Lady Alicia, inwardly rejoiced at what he fancied would be an opportunity to give him a more than ordinary influence over her.

He had said little in reply to the Lady Alicia's request to hear her confession ; indeed, nothing more than to express his readiness to do his duty as a spiritual person : he then remained silent, wishing her to take the lead.

The Lady Alicia, on the other hand, wished as much as possible to spare her pride the pain of stooping ; she wished something like encouragement to proceed from the abbot ; but not a word escaped him : his demeanour was cold and thoughtful, his countenance stern, and subtlety seemed to lurk in the furtive glances of his close and contracted eye.

"It is not, I believe, unknown to you, holy Father Abbot," said the Lady Alicia, "that my ward, the Lady Adela de Marmoutier, has been sought in marriage by the young Lord of Berry Pomeroy Castle."

"An honourable person," replied Baldwin ; "a knight of approved valour ; of an ancient house, and one who is in himself complete in all the qualities of an accomplished gentleman."

"He is all you say, holy father," answered the Lady Alicia ; "and yet there are circumstances—I must add, fatal circumstances—which render my consent to such a union impossible. It is on this subject I would confer with you, that I would seek your counsel ; for which purpose I would make known to you, under the seal of confession, certain matters connected with my own family, in years now long past away, that must be painful for you to hear, but most painful for me to relate. Though to hear of the errors and the frailties of human nature can never surprise even a churchman, who, by searching into his own heart to learn the weakness and wickedness of mankind, must learn that most creatures, like himself, are liable to fall."

Abbot Baldwin, not at all complimented by the manner in which his penitent prepared him for her confession, darted upon her an angry glance. It passed away, however, without the accompaniment of a hasty word, as he recollected that policy required he should not now take offence at anything she said. Yet his brow became clouded, and there was something which indicated an unbending spirit, as he told the Lady Alicia her

wishes should be complied with, and that before he entered further on the subject in question, he would receive her confession.

He led the way: the confessional was within the chapel. Near it stood the altar of St. Magdalen we have already described, and immediately above it arose the painted window, the deep colours of whose glass rendered the light of day so dusky and gloomy, that all within the little chapel was in shade, except where the wax tapers set up by penitents burnt before the shrine, and showed the image of the saint and all the melancholy decorations of her altar, by an unpleasing and almost unearthly glare.

It was at this confessional, kneeling, trembling, fearing, yet never shrinking from her resolve, that in a low impressive voice and manner, the Lady Alicia poured into the ear of the haughty and subtle prelate a confession which astonished even him; accustomed as he was to have laid bare before him, in that place, the secret thoughts of the heart, and to have opened to him that dark volume of human passion, which, to the eye of the common observer, is as a sealed book.

We will not lift the veil of the confessional; we will not disclose those feelings and events which, told to the Church, are held inviolable in their secrecy to all the world besides. We will rather proceed to state what followed the confession.

The duty ended,—the Lady Alicia arose from her knees, dropped her veil over her face, crossed her hands on her bosom, bent her head, and stood for some few minutes silent, as if engaged in thoughts too deep for utterance. She was now perfectly calm; but not so Abbot Baldwin. He came forth from the confessional an altered man; cold and haughty as he was by nature, there was disturbance, even marks of strong and deep emotion, in every line of his face.

He turned hastily towards the Lady Alicia, prepared to speak to her with somewhat less of his accustomed deference, for he thought to find her humbled. He was, however, mistaken, and the first glance of his eye told him that he



was so, and that her pride was unabated. She had sunk into reserve, as a defence against that approach to familiarity, which is sometimes the immediate consequence of having, by our own lips, unfolded a truth calculated to lessen us in the esteem of another. Her demeanour seemed in unison with her mind, for as Baldwin paused for a moment, surprised by a character he had hitherto so little understood, she appeared to him like one who, having offended deeply, with the pride of a spirit resolved to rest on its own strength for support, stands aloof from all the world, and despises every other stay.

"Lady," he said, seeing that she remained silent; "lady, far be it from us to bruise the broken reed, or to quench the smoking flax. Yet we must not give the full absolution of the Church till such time as the penances we have enjoined may be completed."

"All you have commanded, holy father," said the Lady Alicia, "shall be fulfilled."

"And now, as touching the Lady Adela," said Baldwin; "no time must be lost in the disposal of her person. Holy Mary! we know not what a day may bring forth! Follow my instructions, and all shall be well. Now must she be, indeed, the bride of heaven."

"Yet would it not be harsh to force her will, holy father?" said the Lady Alicia. "Might not a temporary retirement be sufficient to estrange her from him, and to break all hope of this union? I have often wished to see Adela an espoused sister of the holy Church in a convent of nuns. Yet my heart would fail me when it came to the point of separation from her, unless her own free will desired such a change. Adela was ever averse to it; and now, alas! her engaged affections would not suffer her to become a willing votress; and to communicate to her the cause of our decision is impossible: she must never know the truth."

"Never!" said Baldwin, "unless she were first the espoused of heaven. The necessity for concealment would then cease."

"She shall never know it from my lips," said the Lady Alicia, with something of her accustomed haughtiness. "Yet," she added, "I would, as far as it may be possible, leave Adela free to act for herself. I would dedicate her, but I would not bind her to the altar, as if she were a sacrifice to be offered up upon it."

"I will not counsel it," said the abbot, who was too subtle not to see that if he attempted to drive his point beyond a certain limit, he might lose the possibility of ultimate success in his too great eagerness to secure it. "Hear what I would advise, lady," he continued: "be secret and be speedy; and till these present difficulties are overpast, place her, as a novice, in a sisterhood of holy nuns. Her will cannot then be forced, and in all probability, before the period of her noviciate is expired, the example of those around her, and the sanctity of the place, will have so reconciled her to a life devoted to heavenly things, that she will herself desire and embrace it."

"Should she do so," replied the Lady Alicia, "the most earnest wish of my heart would be fulfilled. I might myself be induced to follow her example."

"You would do well and wisely," said the abbot, "renouncing all the riches and pomps of this world, to dedicate your possessions to the Church,—yourselves to God. But not now will I urge this matter; I do but mark out to you a course, which you will need no counsel of mine to follow up and adopt in due time and place."

"I will think upon it, holy father," said the Lady Alicia; "but of Adela, where can I bestow her,—in what convent, for safety?"

"Where she shall never more meet Sir Henry de Pomeroy," replied the abbot. "I will point out to you an honourable retreat where her mind shall be prepared for a devoted life, and yet its vows be never forced upon her."

"Do this," said the Lady Alicia, "and I am bound to you for ever. To prove to you, holy father, that I am sincere, I will consent to that measure you have of late so earnestly

solicited,—I will place my Castle of Wilsworthy in your hands, to be manned by the vassals of the abbey, in case civil strife, now so fast gaining ground, should extend itself to the West, and endanger your own safety. Will this satisfy you?”

This was indeed a victory; to gain possession of the Castle of Wilsworthy, to garrison it with his own followers, was a point the subtle Baldwin had long and earnestly laboured to accomplish, but hitherto in vain. His ostensible motive had been to gain a retreat for the aged and persecuted members of the Church in these times of civil strife; but his real motive was to obtain possession of one of the strongest castles of the West, which he might place at the disposal of the Earl of Mortaigne for his rebellious cause. Elated by the prospect, and eager to follow up a multitude of projects to which this new acquisition would give birth, Baldwin hastened to bring the present interview with the Lady Alicia to a close.

“Lady,” he said, “I have a sister who is abbess of the nuns of St. Michael’s Mount in Cornwall. I will recommend to her care the Lady Adela. My sister will be vigilant; she is strict, as the superior of her house,—strict, but not unkind. I will write to her, and apprise her what to do. Believe me, there are means to work upon the will, and yet without harm—such means as wholesome exercise of discipline and authority—that can frame the mind of the young to give a willing consent to a holy purpose. Three days hence, under a guard for safety, but with the utmost secrecy, let the Lady Adela commence her journey to the Mount. The utmost caution must be observed, for should Sir Henry de Pomeroy know your intent, be sure he will intercept her guard, and, if all other means fail, will attempt by force to possess himself of the person of her he considers his affianced bride. Adela once placed in safety at the Mount, I will warrant all danger is at an end. I know well the temper of my sister; she would as soon suffer the degradation of her own power, as a novice to be torn from her grasp.”

“But she will be gentle to Adela,” said the Lady Alicia: “no harsh means——”

"Fear not," said the abbot, interrupting her; "you will yourself have the opportunity to visit her in her noviciate cell. For as I have but now directed, you are to finish your penitential pilgrimage in the chapel of the Mount, on the eve of St. John's day. In the interval, Adela must be removed; all depends on secrecy and despatch. Do this, lady, and do it without delay; then fear not, for heaven will bless a purpose so holy and so just."

The Lady Alicia signified her assent, and bade adieu to Baldwin. Soon after, she hastened back to the castle, where she lost not an hour in making those preparations for the removal of her ward, which, in fact, were first steps towards making the unfortunate Adela a prisoner for life.

The abbot also quitted the church, and retired to his own apartment, where he immediately set to work, and busied himself in writing with his own hand several letters, all more or less connected with the many schemes he had in view.

The first of these epistles was to Sir Henry de Pomeroy, persuading him to undertake forthwith a mission to the castle of a baron (an adherent of the Earl of Mortaigne) in the north of Devon, so that he might be out of the way till the fair Adela was removed and secured. Secondly, he wrote a long letter to his sister, the abbess, a hard-hearted woman, of a temper as stern and as cold as his own; giving her such instructions relative to his views respecting Adela, as were calculated to place her under the most severe and sure control.

## CHAPTER XX.

Oh, nothing now can please me,  
Darkness and solitude, and sighs and tears,  
And all the inseparable train of grief,  
Attend my steps for ever.

DRYDEN.

Oh, take me in, a fellow-mourner with thee.  
I'll number groan for groan, and tear for tear ;  
And when the fountains of thy eyes are dry,  
Mine shall supply the stream, and weep for both.

ROWE.

THE course of our narrative now obliges us to take our reader once more to Wilsworthy Castle, where, in a small turret-chamber of one of its old towers, sat weeping the Lady Adela, as her new bower-maid, Grace Bolt, who had already been won by her sweetness and gentleness dearly to love her young mistress, was making some necessary preparations for that journey so repugnant to the feelings of both.

Grace, whose kind heart felt more for her lady's distress than for her own, for she was to be the companion of her banishment to St. Michael's Mount, tried all her simple arts at consolation, though, like many comforters of higher degree, she often touched on topics which tended to irritate rather than to soothe the wounds of the sufferer. "Well now," said Grace, "Holy Mary and all the saints forgive me! I never think of being shut up in a convent, without thinking that I should be a great deal more wicked there, than ever I had been in the world."

"You should not think so, Grace," said the Lady Adela: "my aunt says it is the only place where I can ever become fit for heaven; and I have been wrong in thinking about Sir Henry de Pomeroy, without her sanction——"

"Say not so, my lady," exclaimed Grace warmly: "wrong, quotha, for thinking of the tallest and the finest young gentleman that eyes ever looked upon on a summer's day! Maybe, our lady aunt thinks of him too much herself, to let you have peace in your thoughts about him. We are not all blind, I trow, though we must all be dumb on such matters about our superiors. But I do not care a rush, and I will speak. I say it is a wicked place for us, that convent we are going to."

"Wherefore wicked?" said the Lady Adela.

"Because, my lady, we can't thank God for sending us there. And though I am but a poor man's daughter, yet I know a discontented mind, in rich or poor, is often in a way to become more a wicked than a good one; for it begins with being dissatisfied with God's care of us, and what He does for us."

"Then, Grace, we ought not to be discontented."

"Ay, my lady, ought is a word oftener and sooner said than acted upon; for we ought to do many things that we can't do. You ought not to think of Sir Henry after my Lady Alicia forbid it; yet you think of no one else from morning till night, or else I am as far out of the truth, as I am from heaven. The saints have mercy on us poor sinners!"

"Alas!" sighed Adela, "how can I forget him?"

"Forget him, no, you'll never forget him. You'll never have such another to think upon; sweet young gentleman! And how grand he looks in his armour, though it's enough to frighten one to see how terrible he seems when he has it all on. But to think of being sent to that dismal old convent in St. Michael's Mount! It is the most dreadful place, they say, in all the world."

"Who told you it was so dreadful?" inquired the Lady Adela.

"Why, my lady, don't I know about St. Michael's Mount, when I used to see fifty pilgrims, or more, on their return from it, more especially after their great day, the eve of St. John? When they came back from their journey, they would often stop and talk with father at our mill, in their way to the monastery."

"And did the pilgrims say that they knew anything about the lady who is the abbess of the convent?" asked Adela.

"Ay, my lady, that they did!" replied Grace; "they said she was just such another as our Lord Abbot. Baldwin himself in petticoats and veil! and she is his sister; he made her abbess of the house. And there is a convent of monks that joins that of the nuns at St. Michael's. It's the only good thing in the place; for it must be so dismal for women to see nothing but women. Don't you think so, my lady?"

"Alas, no!" answered Adela; "if I must be a prisoner, I had rather never see the face of man more."

"Ay, that's because you are in love, my lady," continued the loquacious Grace, who, as some excuse for her prattling, really fancied she did her young mistress good by it, as she would say, to hinder her from thinking.

"For you, my lady, there is only one man in all the world, and that is Sir Henry. Well, to be sure, he is worth fifty such as one sees every day. But I, who am not in love,—that is, not in love with any one in particular—and I could not abide Sir Simon, the curate,—I do like a little merriment and laughing with them, when they are young enough to dance with me. Ah me! we shall have no dancing at the convent. It's cruel to treat us so. And then, they do say," she added in a lower voice, looking grave, and in a mysterious manner, "they do say, there are things to be seen there!"

"Many things, I have no doubt," replied Adela, "that will be strange and new to us, and not a little fearful."

"Fearful!" exclaimed Grace; "I think so; for what, my lady, can be more fearful than a white woman? and they say the Mount has been haunted by one for many a long year;

and that she sits in St. Michael's chair at the top of the old tower, and that all the sea-gulls come flapping their wings and screaming about her, as she calls to the winds, and throws locks of her hair into the sea; and raises the tempest that wrecks the ships, and roars like so many lions in a forest. Oh! the pilgrims tell such things of St. Michael's Mount; and worse than all these, in one way."

"How worse?" said the Lady Adela.

"Oh! they say there's a dungeon in the convent, always kept walled up, and that it is never broken open, except it be to take down to it some refractory novice who will not take the veil, or somebody who has done wrong; and there they leave the condemned person all alone in the dungeon to die, walling her up alive. And they do say the ghosts of the sisters who have so perished come and scratch upon the wall, every night at twelve o'clock in the morning, and nothing quiets them but the ringing of a passing bell, to bid God rest their souls."

"Your accounts of the Mount are fearful indeed, Grace; but I hope the pilgrims may speak more from report than from their own knowledge. I should, seriously speaking, fear hard treatment and the dungeon much more than the supernatural visitants of the place; though Holy Mary forbid I should doubt that evil spirits are punished by being suffered to wander again on earth. But the neighbourhood of the Mount is really evil, for Market Jew\* is just opposite; is it not?—and if all we hear of the wickedness of the Jews be sooth, it is enough to bring all kinds of evil spirits near their dwellings."

Thus spoke the gentle Adela, who, good as she was, was neither more wise nor less credulous than the generality of persons in her day, and who therefore considered the unhappy Jews as devils incarnate; that they were great necromancers, and that among other results of their wickedness, was the permission given to foul spirits to gather in numbers round the towns where they dwelt.

\* Market Jew, the ancient name for <sup>St</sup>Merazion in Cornwall; in the twelfth century it was filled with Jews.



In this particular, however, Grace Bolt showed more acuteness than her mistress; for she remarked, she wondered then why the foul spirits did not keep on their own side, and haunt only Market Jew, without troubling themselves to cross the water to visit St. Michael's Mount, where there were two Christian convents always praying against them.

"But, for my own part," continued Grace, "I can't think how we shall get through the days, months, and years there, with nothing but the same sights every day, the same broad piece of sea; with no birds to listen to but the gulls: the clapper of my poor old father's mill, that went from morning to night, was better than that. And then such a weary set of people as are the nuns; and such an abbess! I shall break my heart, before the year's out, if I go there."

"Then you shall not go there, Grace," said Adela; "no one shall follow me who goes with a reluctant will. Leave me, girl; I can find a companion and attendants enough in my own sad thoughts; I can dispense with you."

The tears rose in the eyes of the Lady Adela, as the picture of her own desolation, among strangers, came before her mind. Perhaps, she felt a little angry at the moment that Grace, to whom she had shown so much kindness, should regret so deeply the amusements of the castle as to place them in competition with her love towards so gentle and so condescending a mistress as she had been to her. But no sooner did Grace hear her mistress propose, in a manner that was marked by a little petulant feeling, that she should leave her to her sorrows in the Mount, than the tears rushed into her eyes, and with the privilege of the young with the young, when alone guided by a generous impulse, she threw her arms round the Lady Adela's neck, and vowed she would never leave her, go where she would, as long as she had life to follow.

There was a pause of a few minutes, whilst each gave way to the fulness of her heart, with tears. Grace was the first to break this silence, because her ideas were more cheerful than

those of her young mistress, and she fancied, also, she had really something to say that would be of service to her.


"Now, my dear lady," she began; "now do not think that what I am going to say is on my own account; for, indeed, I can quit the castle and all the world besides to follow you; for as to Patch, though he is very civil to me, still there is nothing serious yet about him; and there are fifty bachelors, as good as Patch, to be had any day, I will warrant me: so it is not for his sake that I'm about to say what I am going to say; but, in truth, my dear young lady, only for your own sweet sake, and not liking to see true love crossed, which my heart never could abide, when there was a way to help it."

Anxious to come at the matter, Adela begged Grace to tell her to what all this tended, as her affection and fidelity were points she had never doubted.

"Why thus it is, my lady," said the abigail, "I have a plan, as you shall hear; but first let me say, that I do think all this coil about the true loves of Sir Henry de Pomeroy and yourself, without giving any one reason for it, that I can make out, proceeds from nothing but the Lady Alicia being in love with him herself."

"I cannot think it, Grace," said the Lady Adela. "Sir Henry de Pomeroy is young enough to be her son. She would never, for a moment, entertain a thought of such a folly."

"The more the folly, the greater the love," (for, like all the maids of young ladies, Grace Bolt had some knowledge of matters appertaining to the court of love), "I tell you, my dear young lady; for I have seen it, even when I lived at the mill, among our townsfolk and neighbours—I tell you, let a woman once be well in love, and she will see no reasons against it, but all for it. Trust me, my lady loves him, and therefore does she so easily part from you. Now, if you will but follow my counsel, this journey to the convent of St. Michael shall never be."

"Speak it," said Adela; "for I am so unhappy, I would adopt any counsel. Like a drowning wretch, I would catch at  
s to save me."

"Lady, you can write," replied Grace eagerly: "catch at nothing but a gray goosequill; indite me here a letter to Sir Henry; tell him how you are to be spirited away; tell him the day and hour that you are to journey towards St. Michael's Mount. Do this, and trust to him to deliver you from such a cruel enforcement of your will."

"And if I do write, I have no means to convey the letter. We are forbidden to pass the castle gates; we are both watched; and you are suspected on my account. I have not a creature I could trust in such a delicate matter, save yourself, and you cannot help me. And more than all, I know not where Sir Henry may be found at this time; it is long since I have seen him."

"But I know where he is to be found," replied Grace; "and that there is no time to be lost. Cædmon, the Saxon page, came here to-day, with a letter from my Lord Abbot to the Lady Alicia; I saw him for a moment crossing the hall; I always pick out the news from the pages, and from him I learnt that Sir Henry de Pomeroy had this day arrived at the abbey to confer with my Lord Abbot, and that he is to leave it to-night, for some distant part of the county. Cædmon departed, or I would have learnt more; for he is a good youth, and I am sure might be trusted, for the sake of a fair lady's thanks and a kind word. I am sure he might be trusted to deliver a letter, in secret, to Sir Henry de Pomeroy."

"I think he might," said Adela; "but how to get it conveyed to Cædmon, who, you say, is gone back to the abbey?"

"Oh! leave that to me," said Grace; "I can wile our Patch to do a wise man's errand as well as any fool in the west; he would do anything for me for a fair word, or a smile, or, maybe, a kiss. I don't say I ever let him take such freedoms, but I would promise to let him have one if he took safe the letter."

"And I would give him gold to do it," said the Lady Adela.

"Gold, my lady?" exclaimed Grace; "do you think Patch would want gold to make him do your ladyship's bidding?"

The Lady Adela could not suppress a smile in the midst of her distress, and said: "Well, my girl, I will write to Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and will tell him how I am situated; and you shall lose no time in instructing Patch what to do with my letter."

It was soon written, sealed, tied with a silken string, and deposited in the fair and faithful bosom of Grace Bolt, and away she went to seek the fool as her messenger.

She saw him standing and playing with one of his favourite hawks that he had taken down from its perch in the great hall, and at once determined to change her previously arranged mode of attack. So she made as if she would pass on; but in order that his ears might convey to him a sense of her presence, she sang a verse or two of one of the popular ballads.

Patch, who was musical, took her up at the counterpoint, and chimed in with the tune.

"A dainty ballad that, Master Patch," said Grace, as she ended the verse.

"And one that lures the very hawks from their perches when you sing it, my pretty one," said the fool tenderly, as he stooped down and extended his hand to his favourite, who had flown from the perch to the ground.

"I wish that hawk were a carrier-bird, such as our crusaders use, to send any news by, to the Christian prisoners in a Saracen fortress, as we are told in the ballads of the minstrels."

"And wherefore do you wish this, my pretty one?" inquired Patch.

"Because,—because," answered Grace coquettishly, and giving him a smile that made her look very pretty indeed, "because,—I won't tell you."

"Yes, you will,—you must tell me, Grace; me, who would be to you as your carrier-bird, would you but let me, Grace; you do not know how tender I am to you. Do but try me."

"Well, I do not know but I may," she replied: "would you then put wings to your feet, and fly like a swallow for swiftness,

and bear a letter for me to Cædmon, the Saxon page, in secret. Patch, can you keep a secret?"

"Ay, that I can, when it comes from a pretty wench, like thyself, provided it is sealed;" and the fool looked at Grace Bolt's lips as he spoke. He gave also certain other indications of preparing to take that reward she had already intimated to her mistress she might feel disposed to reserve as a payment for his services.

But Grace knew well that to pay beforehand is not always wise; and so she drew up her head, and said rather sharply, "Stand back, Master Patch; you don't play the fool with me; I shall not seal, as you call it, till the letter brings an answer of receipt. No kissing for services to come."

"Then I will do none," said Patch pettishly.

"At your pleasure," replied Grace. "Osgood, the forester, will do my errand as well for me, and ask no present guerdon; though perhaps I may give him leave to take one, because he is too modest to ask it. I shall go to him."

"That's what you shall not," said Patch. "Give me your letter, and I will bear it for you, though it were to the devil's house."

"For shame," said Grace; "it is only to the monastery, where they know so well how to keep him out. But Patch, if you do my errand, you must remember you do it for one greater than I, even for my young lady. And there must be no blundering of your thick head."

"I would cut it off to prevent mistakes, rather than make a dull use of it in your service, my sweetest," said the fool; "only instruct me, and I will obey you."

"Well, then," said Grace, "seek Cædmon, the Saxon page, and tell him, as he loves the saints in heaven, or would win the thanks and prayers of a fair and distressed lady on earth—the Lady Adela—that he give that letter, in secret, to Sir Henry de Pomeroy. Now mind, in secret; and don't talk of your errand to any one."

"I will do all you direct," said Patch, "and do it quickly."

“And be sure and call at the mill,” continued Grace, “and give my duty to father, and tell him that I am going away somewhere with my young lady, but I am told not to mention it to anybody; so I only tell it to you, that you may tell it to him: it is to Mount St. Michael’s, among the nuns in that gloomy place. And be sure and ask father how the new ass carries the sacks of corn, and if he is as good at the load as the old one. And ask how Orgar does, and the little dog too; and give my love to them all.”

Patch promised the fair Molinaria to obey all these her several behests, and set off accordingly to fulfil them.

## CHAPTER XXI.

Bloated with ambition, pride, and avarice,  
You swell to counsel kings and govern kingdoms.  
Content you with monopolising heaven,  
And let this little hanging ball alone ;  
For give you but a foot of conscience there,  
And you, like Archimedes, toss the globe.

DRYDEN.

ABBOT BALDWIN was by no means one of those churchmen who, having obtained the rule over an opulent house, would rest satisfied with what they possess, and, availing themselves of its revenues to meet their own lavish expenditure, would be content to let the rest go in its regular channel for the support of the monastery and the poor.

Little as Baldwin cared for money in itself, it was the very life-blood of his ambitious views ; and without its aid he could not hope to set in motion any of those mercenary partisans with whom he was leagued to carry forward all his plans. The acquisition of wealth was to him, therefore, as an instrument of aggrandisement, one by which he could raise his own fortunes to higher honours, and obtain a larger scope for the exercise of that power he had hitherto enjoyed. With a view to the furtherance of this object, he had originally urged on the marriage between his friend and ally Sir Henry de Pomeroy and the fair Adela. But he had not then been aware that an opportunity would occur enabling him, by having the unfortunate girl within his power, to convert to his own and the Church's

use the whole of her immense possessions. This advantage he had seen at a glance, when the Lady Alicia made her confession, and at once espousing all her views, had sanctioned her purpose of breaking off the projected match between Adela and his friend, and placing her in a convent for life.

Baldwin did not forget that it was absolutely necessary Sir Henry de Pomeroy should be kept in ignorance of the part he took in all these dark designs. For Sir Henry was a person of too much importance to be lost to the cause of the Earl of Mortaigne (by whose favour Baldwin hoped to rise to the very summit of his ambition, were but the prince once seated on the throne), by any offence that might be given him on the part of the abbot or his friends. The removal of the Lady Adela must therefore be so carried forward as to seem the sole unassisted work of the Lady Alicia. And, in order the better to secure her measures from all interruption, the wily abbot had undertaken, as we have seen, to send Sir Henry, on some matter connected with their plots, to the castle of one of the rebel barons, in the north of the county, till Adela should be removed.

But there are moments when the human will, even in the least capricious, cannot be held within its customary line of action. For the first time since these intrigues were set on foot by Prince John, Sir Henry did not obey the advice or instructions of the abbot ; so that, instead of going direct to the north of Devon, he came to the abbey, there to complain to his supposed friend of the rigour with which he had been treated by the Lady Alicia, who had refused him all admission at the castle, since she had been openly acquainted with his pretensions to her ward.

Another cause likewise induced Sir Henry to seek Baldwin : he had lately felt, he could scarcely tell wherefore, a lurking and undefined suspicion of the abbot's sincerity towards him.

Yet nothing particular had occurred to shake his confidence in Baldwin. The truth was that, almost unknown to himself, the hints which had been thrown out by the palmer concerning the abbot, had slowly but surely made an impression on



Sir Henry's mind ; they had caused him to reflect seriously respecting the past. The abbot's intrigues for the Earl of Mortaigne, with all their treachery, thus came before him in a new light ; and Baldwin did not rise in his estimation by this calm but severe retrospection. Sir Henry knew also, that the abbot was a disappointed man ; that his hatred to Richard arose from his having failed in his views of gaining the primacy of England. *That* for years had been the aim of his ambition, for *that* had he plotted, served, toiled, betrayed ; and like many an ambitious character, Baldwin had converted his hopes into expectations, and finally had mistaken his own views for himself, for such as other men in power ought to entertain for him. Hence was it that the bitterness of Baldwin's former disappointments arose more from the deceptions of his own pride and self-conceit than from any other cause.

Richard had given him much ; but from the hour the primacy was denied to his hopes, the abbot, as is usual with ungrateful persons, cancelled the memory of all past obligations, and considered the king as ungrateful to him ; cherishing in his own bosom the feelings of an injured churchman, because he was a dissatisfied man. This dissatisfaction showed itself in everything ; hence had originated those bitter quarrels with the bishop of the diocese, and those appeals to Rome, of which we had occasion to speak formerly : quarrels still unsettled, still rankling and irritating, that served, with the growing spirit of rebellion, to add to the sufferings and the difficulties of many well-disposed persons in the West, who in their secret souls longed indeed for peace. Painful as was the retrospection of all these matters, it was rendered yet more galling, when Sir Henry reflected that there was something strange in the abbot's not having said a word about the Lady Adela for some days past ; nor had Baldwin even named her in the letter in which he had proposed to him the journey to the north. These recollections now so acted on the young Lord de Pomeroy, that he was by no means in the most friendly or satisfied mood when he once more met Baldwin at the abbey.

There was, therefore, something of distance and reserve in the manner of Sir Henry as he saluted the superior with a cold and formal good-morrow.

This cold manner struck the abbot ; it embarrassed him, conscious as he was of the double part he had been playing with his friend ; and this very consciousness caused his own manner to become as distant and reserved as Sir Henry's. They were to dine in private : on former occasions, a meal of this nature was always favourable to the most social intercourse ; but now they sat down to their private repast in the abbot's chamber with the most awkward feelings ; for each felt as if he had a quarrel with the other, and this feeling soon induced a querulous temper in both. At length they differed on some trifling matter ; and when persons do so, whilst under the influence of the captious mood, it seldom fails to end in a real, open, and serious breach. Even so was it now. For not only did they disagree concerning certain steps to be taken in the affairs of the Earl of Mortaigne ; but on Sir Henry's entering upon the circumstances of his severe repulse from the Lady Alicia, and the abbot giving no advice, no counsel about his suit, and no offers of service with the guardian of his beloved Adela (though Baldwin had originally proposed her to him), the fiery lover lost his temper, and in no very measured terms fell upon the abbot with the bitterest reproaches.

Proud, haughty, unused to reproof, and ill brooking it from one he deemed his inferior, Baldwin felt his blood rise ; it glowed in his cheeks, it darkened his brow, it trembled in his whole disturbed frame. He felt he was on the point of bursting upon the petulant boy (for so he deemed Sir Henry, at this moment) with such a passionate reply as in all probability would for ever cause a breach between them ; a breach which might, perhaps, be fatal to the interests of the Earl of Mortaigne.

Under so strong a temptation to give vent to his fury, the abbot had but one way left to preserve his self-command, and that he adopted ere it was too late. On the slight pretext of a matter of business about the abbey that he had forgotten to

arrange with the claustral prior before he sat down to dinner, he had resolution enough to make a hasty retreat, to endeavour, by absenting himself for a short time from the object of his wrath, to overcome its violence. But such an effort at self-command, such a repression of his own feelings, was gall and bitterness to the proud spirit of Abbot Baldwin, who had never curbed his own will to pleasure mortal creature. He was, therefore, not only angry with Sir Henry, but with himself, for thus seemingly having yielded to him.

In this temper of mind, as ill fortune would have it, the first person he met on leaving the dining-chamber was Cædmon the page. The dark spot on the abbot's brow was too evident to escape the notice of the youth, who looked his thoughts, as he stopped short and bowed in silence to his superior. Had the page been wise, he would not have looked at Baldwin as if he were struck with the disturbance of his countenance; he would have passed on, without seeming to heed it. As it was, the keen glance of the Saxon's eye was sufficient to give a new cause of offence to a proud and irritated mind, which, like an animal of prey, when once roused into fury, will fall on any one who may chance to cross its path, though the object which originally called up its rage has escaped him.

Even so was it now: the mind of Baldwin (ill governed in all matters where its own schemes were not immediately and vitally concerned) felt some kind of relief in having an object thrown in its way on which it could with impunity vent the overflowing bitterness of its own feelings. On seeing Cædmon, therefore, advance to the door of the gallery which led into the chamber wherein he had left Sir Henry, the abbot asked in a rough, rude, and sudden manner—"What might be Cædmon's business, that, without asking permission, he was about to seek his guest, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, in his (the abbot's) private chamber?"

"My Lord Abbot," answered Cædmon, "I have a letter to deliver into Sir Henry's own hands."

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"A letter! from whom?"

"I am not at liberty to say, my lord," replied Cædmon, mildly but firmly.

"Not at liberty to say!" re-echoed the abbot: "Ha! that's strange. But you are my page, and I command you, on your obedience to me, to give up the letter to my hands. I will deliver it."

"I dare not do so," replied Cædmon.

"Dare not!" exclaimed the abbot, again, in the very surprise of the circumstance, repeating the page's words. "How dare not?"

"Because," replied Cædmon, "my own honour would not suffer me to do so. I have promised to deliver it into no hand but that of Sir Henry."

"Then I will save thy nice honour, insolent boy," said the abbot; and he attempted to thrust his hand into the breast of Cædmon's tunic, and to take thence the letter.

The boy struggled. "No, my Lord Abbot, no," he said vehemently, "this must not be; I would rather die on the spot, than betray a trust. My duty to you, my lord, is much, but to preserve my honour is to myself more. I will not yield the letter up to you."

"This from a base-born slave!" cried the abbot passionately.

"The Norman abbot has forgot what belongs to his own honour, in the greatness of his power," said Cædmon; "but the Saxon boy will remember what is due to his, even in the misery of the most abject dependence. Proud abbot! I am neither base-born, nor a slave; but the son of a brave Saxon thane, nobler born than thyself."

Irritated to the quick by this disrespectful and indignant speech, from the lips of a poor Saxon youth, who was his own and (in other moods) his favoured page, Baldwin (who had good cause for a reasonable anger) unhappily so far forgot his manhood, and the respect due to himself as a churchman, that in the vehemence of his passion, he struck Cædmon. The youth recoiled some steps on receiving the blow; but not from

its violence. He recoiled from the shock sustained by his inward feelings by such an indignity. The blow struck most on the spirit, not on the body of the Saxon.

His whole countenance became in an instant changed ; all that there was of the gentleness, the sweetness which usually characterised it, fled ; and though the features remained the same, yet it seemed as if one of those enraged spirits that were the theme of Saxon story, had suddenly animated them with the very instinct of evil. His cheek was blanched, his lips closed, his teeth set together ; he drew hard his breath, though not a word escaped him—such deep passions had no utterance ; and there was a sternness in his vulture eye, as he placed his hand upon his side, as if to draw his poniard to requite on the spot the dishonour he had received.

Fortunately, however, he had left his poniard where it chanced to be lying, on the table of the scriptorium, at the moment when Patch committed to his trust the letter. This circumstance, in all probability, saved the life of the Lord Abbot ; but it could not his own. Cædmon knew it. He knew well, the instant he could think of what had passed, that his passionate words, his still more passionate action, towards the superior of an abbey that had the privilege of pit and gallows, and in such arbitrary times, must be fatal to him. He knew he should be sentenced to die by a means the most degrading : the thought was not to be endured. Deprived of the instrument of an immediate resentment, stung to the very soul by a sense of his disgrace, and almost maddened with the vehemence of his insulted feelings, he exclaimed, as the abbot endeavoured to detain him—

“Let me go, my Lord Abbot, let me go ;—you have struck me, you have dishonoured me for ever ! My fathers never brooked a blow ! You have ruined the Saxon boy who loved you ; whose heart beat warmly in gratitude to you. You have lowered him in his own eyes, in his own esteem. You have left him nothing to hope for but in death.”

So saying, with a wildness in his looks amounting almost to

frenzy, he rushed past Baldwin, and before any interruption could be given to his purpose, quitted the abbey. Like the hunted hart that carries in his side the arrow that has stricken but not slain him, Cædmon fled with a swift step and a tortured mind, to seek Wulfred, the old Saxon crusader, the faithful follower of his grandsire Oswy, and the last remaining friend to whom he could unburthen his heart, or who was capable of estimating the extent of his injuries, and the strength of his indignant emotion.

## CHAPTER XXII.

Death could not a more sad retinue find,  
Sickness and pain before, and darkness all behind.

NORRIS.

WHEN Cædmon rushed from the presence of Abbot Baldwin, he felt as if all the world had risen against him, because the world within himself had rebelled, and his sense of indignation had passed the bounds of reason. He had loved Baldwin, and Baldwin had disappointed his feelings. The first disappointments of youth, be they in friendship or in love, are ever the bitterest; as at that period of life the mind has not acquired experience sufficient to make it, in some measure, expect disappointment, whilst it teaches it to bear with submission those evils that are inevitable, and to look with a patient hope on all such as are capable of alleviation from time, circumstance, or change.

Cædmon knew Baldwin too well to hope for a reconciliation after what had passed. He knew, though the abbot had so highly favoured and esteemed him, he was not a man who could love; for he had far more imagination than sensibility in his character; and all the superior's preferences and friendships had ever more to do with his temper or his interest than with his heart. Thoughts such as these crowded on the young Saxon's mind, and so possessed him, that he seemed scarcely conscious of the path over which he trod in his way to old Wulfred's lowly dwelling.

He had to cross in his track a small but thick wood ; he now drew near its confines. It was evening ; the sun was sinking amidst clouds of a threatening aspect, dull, heavy, and dark, as if laden with a gathering storm. The "melancholy boughs" which overhung his path, waved gently in the rising breeze, and gave forth sounds that to his disquieted mind seemed like the low and monotonous murmurs of a suppressed grief. Cædmon passed under their profound shade with feelings in harmony with the hour and the scene. He was exactly in that state of mind which is raised by its own expectations to receive every accidental circumstance with a painful impression, a foreboding of evil.

At the outskirts of the little wood, and not far from the path that led directly to the cottage, ran a small stream, over whose banks hung the pendent boughs of a few willows. Alone, and apart from these, the younger possessors of the soil, and as if shunned by them in its age and its misery, arose the decaying trunk, with a few remaining branches, of a withered and blasted oak ; an oak which, in the last stage of its decay, had been struck with lightning : the honours of its antiquity not spared ; even as in human life we sometimes see the gray and venerable head laid down by some sudden stroke of adversity, after it had long and bravely withstood the manifold assaults of an envious world. On one of the few and withered boughs of the old oak, there now sat a raven, that croaked its dismal note as Cædmon passed the spot : a more fearful omen to a true-born Saxon, filled with all the superstitious terrors of his age, could not be found. Cædmon looked up and shuddered : "It is the death-bird's cry," he muttered to himself, and with an impatience so common to passionate tempers, when worked to their utmost pitch, he resented even on the poor bird the bitterness of his own feelings, as he stooped, and gathering up some loose stones that lay in the path, threw them at the raven. But the melancholy harbinger of evil, untouched, and undismayed by the vain assault that had been made upon her, kept her seat on the



withered bough, and only answered the attempt by a reiterated cry.

Cædmon cursed the omen and passed on. In a less excited state, he would have made the sign of the cross for protection; but his anger was now too fierce for any approach to such religious practices.

As he drew near the village church, of which we spoke in an earlier part of this narrative, he turned his eye to the cross; at whose base, when he had last visited the spot, he had seen old Wulfred, surrounded by the favourite playmates of extreme age—a company of little children. He had also often there seen him watching, with a “lack-lustre eye,” the last beams of the setting sun.

The cross remained just as it had stood ever since it had been raised in the early stages of Christianity, by the piety of one of Cædmon’s great Saxon ancestors, who had also built the church that was at hand, on the site of an ancient baptistery. That cross now stood, in the silence of evening, illumined by the bright beams of the departing sun; but Wulfred was not there. Four or five children, who looked hard at Cædmon as he passed along, were standing or sitting round its base, but not engaged in their usual play; they seemed to want the friendly and accustomed leader of their sports, the old Crusader, who, in his decay, had amused them in his idle hours, and kept up the last show of authority, to which extreme age so tenaciously clings, in the right to exercise it over children.

Cædmon did not speak to these little ones as he passed, for he was in no mood for gentle words and thoughts. He soon cleared the remainder of his way, and stood before the door of Wulfred’s dwelling.

All without the cottage was still, and Cædmon fancied more than usually neglected; for a wooden seat, on which the old man often reposed at his door, was overturned; and two or three domestic fowls, that Wulfred was accustomed to keep within bounds, were now ranging unconfined, and had scratched

holes and pits among the few flowers, and in the only bed of potherbs the little garden could boast.

These indications of something different from the usual course of things did not escape Cædmon; and it was not without a secret misgiving he raised the latch, and, as if fearful of disturbing those who might be within, entered softly the low-roofed cabin. The very first glance told Cædmon all the truth—Wulfred was on the bed of death.

There, on a heap of straw and dried fern, wrapped in his woollen cloak, his lower limbs covered with a blanket, lay the faithful follower of the once gallant Oswy. Wulfred's head was supported by a heap of straw, on which was a pillow, his only luxury, and one that had been a gift of charity to his sick bed. Scarcely anything worthy the name of furniture was in the room: a few domestic utensils of the rudest kind, and a crucifix, constituted all his wealth; except that on the walls hung the arms and armour of this faithful soldier of the cross. These warlike habiliments had been carefully kept; for to scour and furbish arms, which he had no strength to wield, had been one of the chief employments of Wulfred in his old age.

Two faithful creatures were all that now attended the last hours of poor Wulfred. But those were each of a kind the last to desert man in the moments of his extremity, or his distress; a woman and a dog watched by his bed of death.

The scene was indeed impressive: there lay the worn-out Crusader; his countenance venerable, pallid, but still expressive even in death,—his eye dim, but raised, as if it sought from above that light which, on earth, was for him nearly shut out. The damps of pain and weakness were on his furrowed brow; but though in the last stage of life, he breathed tolerably free, and spoke stronger than he had done for some days past; at least so thought the Saxon Bertha. She said also that his mind sometimes wandered, yet only in reference to the past, which he would often fancy to be present with him. But when recalled to himself, and his attention fixed on any point, he was at once clear, distinct, and self-possessed. It seemed to Cædmon

as if, in shaking off mortality, Wulfred parted only with the memory of the latter years of his life, and the pains and infirmities that had been their portion ; but that all his early recollections and feelings clung to his spirit, partook of its immortality, and became, as it were, to him a part of that futurity to which he now looked forward with a sense of awe not unmingled with fear.

Cædmon asked, as soon as sorrow would let him speak, how long had he been thus? had he been cared for? and was there hope?

"Alas ! no," replied Bertha ; "for the death-bird has croaked under his window, and the cricket has been heard ; and yesterday a white horse came without a rider to his door. There is no hope for him on earth ; but all the saints watch for our good Wulfred in heaven."

"Alas !" said Cædmon, "and was it but to witness this, I have now sought him in the hour of my affliction ! When I would fly from myself, from my own misery, it is but to meet a comforter in death !"

"That is the voice of Cædmon," said Wulfred, who caught the last words, as the Saxon stood near the bed. "He so young, and talk of death ! It is only the old like me, who ought to talk of that ; old, sick, and dying. Cædmon ! where is he ? Give me your hand."

"I am here, Wulfred. I came to seek you, to counsel with you ; but little did I think to find you thus. I am here ; do you see me ?—here is my hand."

"Yes, yes, I can see you now" (Cædmon had thrown himself down beside the bed of straw) ; "but my eyes are dim ; and to me you look not as you used to do—all looks darker. But the darkness I know is in myself—in my poor old eyes ; but it suits best with the place where I am going—to the grave."

"And must I lose you, Wulfred !" exclaimed Cædmon, in a tone of passionate sorrow : "must I lose you, my only friend ! Would that I could give you my youth, and take your age, and lay me down in death instead of you ; for of life I am, indeed, already weary."

"Alack ! what is that ?" said Wulfred ; "already weary of life ! Oh, say not so, dear Cædmon ! those are sad words to come from so young a heart. None but the old should know sorrow, for none but such as are old know the world. What has chanced ?"

"I must not tell you, Wulfred ; you are in no condition to be disturbed by my injuries or my griefs. Had you been well, I would have counselled with you—but not now ! think not of me, but of yourself. Is there aught I can do for you ?"

"Pray for me, Cædmon, pray for me ! for I am going where no man may serve me, unless it be with such gifts as God will alone accept in payment for His blessings, the gifts of prayer and praise."

"I do, Wulfred, I do pray for you. May the Virgin and all saints have mercy on you, and receive your soul, whenever it is called hence to its eternal rest. But I trust you may yet be spared. Your speech is too firm, your mind too collected, for a man dying."

"You are mistaken," replied Wulfred ; "I know I shall not pass over this night ; the sun that sets to-day, will set the last for me : I know it, Cædmon."

"How know it ?" inquired Cædmon.

"No matter," said Wulfred.

"He has had a death vision," whispered Bertha in a low voice, as she looked mysteriously around her ; "but I must not say what it was ; he charged me not to tell it. Perhaps he will tell it you himself anon."

Cædmon would have replied, but Wulfred, who dearly loved the young thane, now addressed him with much warmth, and said : "You talked, Cædmon, of injuries and griefs ; who has injured you ? or did you speak but of those injuries which have come to you from the wrongs of your fathers, as a part of your birthright ? for so the Normans have dealt with you and yours."

"Could you aid me, Wulfred, I would even now complain ; but, alas ! you cannot," answered Cædmon ; "and so let my

injuries rest where heaven can alone find them, and visit them for comfort, within my own heart. A Norman has, in truth, been ever fatal to our house."

"A Norman!" exclaimed Wulfred, "a Norman!" for the very sound of that word, coupled with a complaint of injustice, called up in the mind of Wulfred a fearful train of recollection: "Ay, a Norman has in truth injured thee, rendered thee fatherless, homeless, beggared, little better than a slave." As he spoke the old man seemed greatly disturbed.

"Peace, Wulfred, peace," said Bertha; "think not of these matters; they will but shake out of thee the little life that remains; rather take comfort to thy heart, and think upon the cross."

She held up that which depended from the rosary at her side, as she spoke; but an allusion of this kind was not at all calculated to soothe the awaking recollections of Wulfred.

"Think upon the cross!" he exclaimed; "ay, I do think upon it—I see it—look, Cædmon, look! there he stands."

"Who, my dear Wulfred, to what do you allude?"

"Rest thee, rest thee," again said Bertha. "He cannot bear these starts now," she added, looking at Cædmon.

"I can bear my sword yet, and can carry my master's shield, as I did in the day of battle," said Wulfred. "Oh! that was a glorious day. Oswy—the noble Oswy. Do you not see him? there—there: see how he grasps the cross! See how his armour shines—his sword glances in the sun. His looks, how calm they are; they are not those of a man, for though terrible they are bright, and his eye has in it the glance of an eagle. A glory is round his head, as his white plume waves above his crest."

"His mind wanders to the days of war and youth," said Cædmon; "has he been thus before?"

"Yes, three or four times since his illness, when he has not slept much," said Bertha; "the fit comes and goes, it seldom lasts long; and the hermit of Wilsworthy, who came yesterday to see him, said it was a temptation of the evil spirit, who fears he may die in prayer and in peace."

"I fear not to die," said Wulfred; "I have seen Oswy down, and have stood over his dead body, till my own blood mingled with that which flowed from his wounds. I fear not death, but I know what I fear."

"You can have no reasonable grounds for fear, Wulfred," said Cædmon; "you have lived faithful, and have done your duty as a soldier and a man; what should you have to fear? the Mother of Heaven will protect you."

"Will she?" said Wulfred; "will she?" and his thoughts took a new turn; and looking at Cædmon, "let me—let me comfort you," he said eagerly; "let me do something for you, my dear young master, ere I depart, to prove how devoted is the last follower of the noble Oswy, to the last descendant of his house. Let me do this, and I shall die happier. Who has injured you? what has happened?"

"The worst that could befall me. I have quarrelled with, and, I must say it, I have insulted Abbot Baldwin. A circumstance arose which displeased him; he struck me a blow, and I could not brook it. I attempted I know not what to show my resentment. I abandoned the abbey, broke every law of the school to which I am sworn, and fled to thee. I could not brook a blow."

"No!" exclaimed Wulfred, as the light of an impassioned feeling once more flashed from his dim eyes; his countenance, for the moment, becoming flushed, and his whole frame seeming to undergo a change, so greatly was he affected by what he heard. The effect on his countenance might be compared to the sudden light which bursts from the electric fire within the cloud, and for an instant illumines with a brilliancy more than natural the whole of its dark surface. "No, Cædmon, no!" he continued with energy, "a Saxon-born thane must not brook a blow. We will resent it. I was thy grandsire's armour-bearer—but, alas!" he added, as he relapsed into weakness from the exhaustion produced by his own energy, "it is bootless; it will not be; human weakness prevails, and the old servant can do nothing but weep with his master when the sword that he would wield for him

drops from his feeble grasp. Life wanes fast with me; Cædmon, come nearer; give me thy hand, and hear all I can do to serve thee."

He paused—Cædmon obeyed; and after having in some measure recovered strength, Wulfred thus continued, but in weaker accents, and in periods that became slow and broken. "Oh, young man, hear the last monitions of a dying friend. Thou hast a noble spirit, but beware it leads thee not into vain contests with those who are much too powerful for thy weak and oppressed condition. The Norman has now the rule in England; the Saxon is degraded to the dust. Let it be so for a while. It is God's will, and remember, though the Norman may make a slave of thee, he cannot degrade the mind of a brave man. Farewell, my master—farewell. You will see this worn-out body laid in the dust in peace."

Cædmon wept, and assured him he would do all to fulfil his wishes.

"Yes," said the dying man, "you will remember me, I believe it; and you will help to pile the cairn, where the bones of poor Wulfred, the faithful follower of your house, are laid to rest. And to this cottage will you sometimes come also; you will not pass the door, at the eventide, without stopping to cast a kindly look upon it; and the thoughts will come back upon your heart of the old man, sitting at his own door, as the light of the setting sun shone upon his white hairs, and he would rise to bid you welcome. You will give a sigh, maybe, to see how altered are all things since he was gone; that the little garden, in which he laboured, lies neglected; that it failed, when his strength failed who for so long a time had dressed it; and then you will pluck a flower from among the weeds that will spring up, and will bear it away with you, for the memory's sake of old Wulfred."

He sunk back on his straw as he spoke; Bertha offered him again a cordial, but he could taste only a few drops.

"No," he said, "no! it will not help me; my minutes are nearly told, the glass has nearly dropt its last sands. On every

limb Death lays his hand ; by-and-by he will chill the heart, and when that is cold, who would wish to linger here ? Pray for me."

Both Cædmon and Bertha sunk on their bended knees beside his straw.

Wulfred now changed visibly ; he could no longer raise himself from the pillow, but he lifted up his hands, and seemed to gaze intently on his finger ends : "They are numbed," he said ; "I have no feeling in them. Is it night yet ? it is very dark and dull.—Cædmon—Bertha—where are you ? gone—no one near me—save me !—The Norman, the Norman victors ; they have me down—down at the base of the cross. They have borne away Oswy's body ;—but I will not be kept off—will not—will not——"

He fainted, the last word but half-spoken, for the efforts he had made in these the last moments of his wanderings, to raise himself up in his bed, had been too much for him. Once more did Bertha give him her assistance, as Cædmon ran and brought fresh water from a neighbouring spring. He sprinkled it on Wulfred's face ; but it was all in vain : nothing could restore him to his senses ; and in that state, after a convulsive struggle, the worn and weary soldier passed out of life, and slept the sleep of death.

Cædmon closed Wulfred's eyes, and kissed his lips, as he said affectionately : "Farewell to thee, dear Wulfred—thou last, thou only and true friend. Something tells me we shall not long be sundered ; and that the old and the young head may even yet be gathered under one cairn."

The youth then turned to comfort Bertha, but she would not be comforted ; for now her kinsman Wulfred was gone, she felt she was indeed bereaved.

He gave her instructions, therefore, what to do about gathering together the few Saxons in the neighbourhood, who would, he knew, gladly follow Wulfred's remains to their last home ; and having learnt from her all his wishes about the place of



burial, proposed to pass the night in the cottage, and on the morrow to attend the body of his friend to the grave, as he had desired.

All was speedily arranged, and Cædmon now endeavoured to compose his spirits, and to gain a few hours' rest for the night.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

Their tears, their little triumphs o'er,  
Their human passions now no more.

GRAY.

The shrinking band stood oft aghast,  
At the impatient glance she cast—  
Such glance the mountain eagle threw,  
As, from the cliffs of Ben-venue  
She spread her dark sails on the wind,  
And, high in middle heaven reclined,  
With her broad shadow on the lake,  
Silenced the warbler of the brake.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

THE course of our narrative now leads us to a scene wild and strange, where art had combined with nature to render it the more imposing.

In the very heart of the dreary waste of Dartmoor, on the side of a lofty range of heights, watered at their base by the rapidly flowing Dart, stood an ancient and stunted wood of oaks; so old that they seemed to have become dwarfed by the very decrepitude of age: yet, as if to soften and embellish their decay, time had entwined and garlanded their bald heads with many an ivy crown; and many a coat of the finest and thickest moss encircled their limbs, and protected their trunks from the rudeness of the blast, and the fierceness of those tempests so common in the elevated region in which they stood. It was indeed a region replete with wonder and with awe. It overlooked, to a con-

siderable extent, the vast and silent moor, and those majestic granite tors which rose, as watch-towers, on every side.

Around the wood of stunted oaks was seen many a rude circle of stones, the temples of an ancient superstition; the hallowed cromlech, the funeral cairn, and the rocks consecrated to the rites of heathenism with their deep and indented basins. The gentle rill of a pure spring that here found its source, ran trickling down the hill towards the river below, to which it carried the small tribute of its waters. The music of the mountain winds, wild as the harp of *Æolus*, was here heard in melancholy cadence; whilst the rush of the river, as it made its swift course over innumerable rocks in the valley of the Dart, harmonised perfectly with their tones, and with all those sounds of nature, that seem not for a moment to break the silence of the desert, but rather to add to its awe; even as a requiem for the dead adds to the solemnity of that silent sorrow which is observed by the mourning train.

The eye wandered over this scene of grandeur, till the view was terminated in the far horizon by the waters of the Atlantic, which could only be distinguished from the sky above, by a more brilliant and silvery appearance, than was presented by the clouds with which they seemed to mingle. Opposite to the height on whose side was the wood we have just named, arose another eminence, called in the ancient British language *Bair-down*, or the Hill of Bards. There the harps of a hundred priests of the ancient Druids had once rung out their "glorious chime," as awakening their chords in the ceremonies of the sacred procession, "the white-robed bards" had slowly descended to the great temple in the *cursus*, near the rock idol of the plain.

This spot, "the lonely wood of *Wistman*," had witnessed many an august and fearful scene of Celtic superstition; there the light of rising suns had fallen on the hecatomb of human sacrifice. The shrieks of human agony had startled the eagle from her cleft in the rock, as she screamed again in answer to the cry, and soared on her affrighted wing to where the accents of misery could no longer reach her amid the clouds.

These were scenes of ancient days, that had once been common amid those stern solitudes of nature. In the times of the Saxons, they had been scarcely of a milder character, when Woden and Frea were the gods of the people, till they became humanised and enlightened by their conversion to Christianity. Yet, still, though no longer heathen, so primitive a race retained an attachment to their old places of worship, that lingered among them for many generations; not the less tenaciously retained, because, after the Norman conquest, laws and edicts had been employed in the endeavour to root it out. Of this kind was the law against the superstitious worship of sacred fountains (enacted not long after the Conquest) especially aimed against that most favoured of all the ancient rites with which the Saxons had mingled their observance of Christianity.

The little rill we have noticed in Wistman's wood (whose waters, at the time of which we speak, were carefully collected at their head into a large granite basin) was a fountain of this nature. It was guarded by a Saxon sibyl, Thorbiorga, who made her dwelling in a rude and rocky habitation near the spot. The whole scene was imposing, and calculated to impress the imagination with a sense of the sublime.

The Saxon sibyl sat in a rude stone chair, originally constructed by the Druids, standing before the fountain which lay clear as a mirror at her feet. She was neither old nor young; of a tall and commanding stature, with large but not ill-formed features: and something there was in her countenance and demeanour which inspired respect. She was attired in a gown of green cloth, her head covered with a cap made of the skin of a black lamb, edged with that of a white cat. About her throat she wore a necklace of large glass beads, called adders' eggs (a remnant of Druidical superstition), and from her waist depended a sort of rosary of the same. On her feet she had sandals, tied with leather thongs; she wore also a Hunlandic, or magic girdle, in which were placed her implements of the black art. A wand, or staff of ash, ornamented with brass knobs, rested by her side. Her hair, straying from beneath the lamb's-skin cap, hung long

and loose down her back. Altogether there was something wild and striking in her face and figure. She sat, knotting a long piece of twine, and tying into each knot a bunch of rosemary, yew, or bitter herbs. Whilst thus employed, she murmured in a low and not unmusical voice the magical song in the old Norse poetry called the *Vardlokur*. As she did so, she glanced her eye from time to time to the small narrow path which wound up the side of the hill towards the fountain where she was seated.

At length the sibyl paused in her song, and listened. Then arose the mournful melody of a funeral dirge, that was echoed among the hills; and immediately after, turning round the abutment of a large rock (which had concealed those who approached from her view, till they were within a few yards of the sacred fountain), Thorbiorga saw the funeral train she was expecting.

First came two aged women, followed by a few Saxons of the humbler class, and several children. Then a number of young persons advanced, bearing in their hands boughs of trees or flowers, and singing, in a wild and melancholy manner, a Christian requiem for the departed soul. Next came an old Saxon priest, attended by Cædmon the page, mounted on a horse, who, with a few other horsemen, followed as mourners for the dead.

Cædmon was now in a very different mood from that in which we last saw him: he was calm; but in the melancholy that overspread his features, there was something that indicated a sorrow which had more in it than the soft and subduing grief occasioned by the sight of death; it was more like the secret working of some powerful passion of the mind.

After him came, laid on a bier, supported by four bearers, the corpse. It was covered with a cloak, and strewed with funeral herbs and flowers. The procession was terminated by a few of the poorer Saxons, all weeping, singing, or lamenting. The funeral train stopped before the sacred fountain.

Thorbiorga arose ; on seeing the priest she bowed reverently. "Welcome, Father Oswald," she said, "welcome. What son of the Saxon people is it who is brought here to lay his bones among the old cairns of our fathers?"

"It is one," replied an aged man standing at the head of the bier, "who in early life bore his arms manfully ; brave in battle, faithful in service. Age has at length borne him down to the grave ; and here do we bring him, according to his last request, that he may lay his bones among his fathers, where the Norman will not disturb his rest. Thou, Thorbiorga, wilt here do thy part—thou wilt sprinkle the corpse with the waters of the sacred fountain, so that no evil spirit shall have the power to disturb it, and wilt make thy funeral song for his decease, and leave none of our ancient Saxon rites unaccomplished."

Thorbiorga bowed to the thane (for it was one of no meaner rank who had addressed her). "Thou hast honoured the brave and the poor by thy presence, noble thane," she said ; "thy wishes shall be fulfilled. I will make my lament for the brave, who falls asleep, after the toils of a faithful life. The corpse shall be sprinkled, the flowers shall be strewn, the cairn shall be heaped, and no rite left unaccomplished. And hither shall the Saxon come, who seeks in solitude to make his moan for a brother."

As she concluded, Cædmon, who had hitherto stood silent, approached the bier, uncovered the corpse, and looked upon it mournfully. Shield, sword, head-piece, coat of mail, and javelin, were all laid on the bier. The countenance, though fixed in the pallid hues of death, presented the composed character of one who sleeps calmly.

Cædmon clasped his hands together, looked on the corpse intently, and then said : "And art thou gone, Wulfred ? is all closed on earth with thee ? and was it but to find thee on thy death-bed—to receive thy parting breath—was it but for this I sought thee in the hour of my distress ! Thou true and only friend of the orphan, whose fathers thou hast served so long—farewell to thee, brave Wulfred ; thou wilt rest well, after thy

long day of faithful service. Farewell! I, who received thy last breath, will lay thy head in the ground, and then will I bethink me in what way it will best become the grandson of Oswy to honour the memory of his faithful follower in death."

So spoke Cædmon, as the humble and simple-mannered train of mourners stood somewhat apart from the body, leaving the thane and the young Saxon to assist in the more immediate rites that were to be performed ere the priest did his office for the dead.

These rights were few and simple, though the superstitions of paganism were singularly mingled with those of the obscured Christianity of the period. To keep off the demons of Saxon belief, Thorbiorga sprinkled the corpse with some of the lustral waters of the sacred fountain, which she had taken from the spring-head in an oaken bowl. This she did with a dignity of manner and energy of expression the most impressive, following the sun's course in pacing round the bier and performing the lustral rite.

The body was next laid on the ground, within one of the many circles of stone that were found on the spot. The priest then performed his part of the obsequies, and no sooner was this ended, than all who had followed in the train commenced the work of burial, throwing, with shovels they had brought with them for the purpose, a quantity of earth over the corpse; for it was the ancient custom of the Saxons to lay their dead on the surface, and to pile the heap of earth and the cairn, or heap of stones, upon them. The earth being thrown over Wulfred, the attendant mourners next each brought a stone, and so continued to pile together large pieces of granite, taken from the surrounding rocks, singing and lamenting as they did so, till the cairn was raised.

Then did the priest advance, and plant a rude cross of wood upon the grave. The armour of the deceased was next placed upon it, and there, under the watch of Thorbiorga, it was to remain till the third day after the funeral, when the next of kin, if a freeman, would be at liberty to claim it, and remove

it from his grave. On these trophies of the warrior, agreeably to the most ancient of the Saxon rites, did the sibyl of her people now hang her knot of fate.

The funeral ceremonies accomplished, the mourning train retreated in the same order in which they had advanced, without any refreshment but such as the pure fountain might supply to slake their thirst; for Wulfred's kindred were not of a rank to give one of those funeral feasts (often converted into scenes of riot and debauchery) that were usual at the burials of the nobly born and more wealthy Saxons.

Cædmon alone lingered; he stayed to consult Thorbiorga, not knowing to whom else he could turn for counsel in his present strait, now that his venerated friend Wulfred was no more. In proportion as his former passions had been tumultuous, they had now sunk into stillness, but not into forgetfulness. The indignity he had suffered at the hands of the Norman abbot was to him an indelible dishonour; it was to his mind what the barbed arrow is to the body that it strikes—it rankled and festered in the wound. He knew not what to do, nor where to seek reparation for his injured spirit; for Baldwin was a churchman, and Cædmon a Christian; the person of a priest must be sacred in his eyes. He was desirous, therefore, to find relief for his wounded spirit in a bold and decided change of fortune, where he might show to Baldwin, and to all the world, that it was from no craven nature, but from a respect towards a churchman, that he had had magnanimity enough to forbear all resentment.

Not knowing on what to decide, in this turmoil of feeling and of thought, he was glad to seize on a way pointed out to him by the superstitions of his own people, to leave his conduct to a mysterious and supernatural guidance. Nor must Cædmon be hastily condemned for such a purpose; he was no wiser than the age in which he lived, and agitated by passions such as we have described, it was no wonder that his restless spirit, torturing him with a thousand doubts and struggles, at the moment which seemed to him as the crisis of his fate, determined him to rush on destiny, and to learn from the mystic



arts of Thorbiorga the course it would be best for him to take.

There was a repose, a stillness, in the elevated region in which he now stood, amidst the noblest features of the rugged moor, that harmonised well with this state of feeling ; and now in language which was at once solemn and energetic, he called on Thorbiorga to direct him in this fearful contest of his mind.

"Speak low," said Thorbiorga ; "speak low, for this is the hour of the spirit ; anon he will darken the fountain, and I will read to thee thy fate. It is the hour of the coming of Thunre ; he will brook no voice but his own in these wild regions."

Awed by her manner and her words, as the sibyl stretched forth her ashen wand over the sacred fountain, raised her head, and seemed to gaze with her prophetic eye on some spirit invisible to mortal ken, Cædmon in a low voice said :

"Tell me what to do ; delay not thy instructions. I am as the stricken hart, that bleeds and thirsts beside the waters."

"As the stricken hart thou shalt not be," said Thorbiorga : "thou shalt strike him whose hand sent its malicious shaft against the smitten hart. I will give thee the means, and show thee a way to retrieve thy tarnished honour, and to win thee fame."

Cædmon raised his head, looked earnestly at the sibyl as she contemplated the sacred and wonder-working fountain, in which he could see nothing but the reflection of the deep blue sky, and the wild flowers and tufts of moss that grew and clung about its sides.

"Noble Cædmon," said Thorbiorga, "thou worthy son of a worthy race, mark my instructions. Put on thee, straight, the armour of Wulfred ; it is here. Mount thy good steed, grasp Wulfred's shield, bear his javelin in thy hand, and hie thee to yonder plain. There shalt thou meet one to whom thou mayst render a service. Ere the sun had risen over yonder hill, did the tyrant Norman, Geoffrey de Malduit, send to me one

of his people to learn from me if this day would be propitious to an enterprise he meditated against an enemy. Acting on the fears of his messenger, I learnt all the truth. On this day the Lady Alicia de Beaumont purposes to quit her castle and commence a pilgrimage to the sacred shrines in Cornwall, and the Lady Adela de Marmoutier goes to Mount St. Michael. Geoffrey means to intercept their progress, to seize by violence the person of the Lady Adela, and to carry her to his own castle. He has with him a band of resolute mercenaries, and some of those recreant knights who, being disgraced in the Holy Land, have become reckless, and are ready for any dishonourable action. In order to screen themselves from detection, they have covered their shields with black cloth, that their proper cognisance may not be known. The Lady Alicia," continued Thorbiorga, "is the present possessor of the castle that was thy grandsire Oswy's—that should have been thine. Hast thou then, Cædmon, magnanimity of soul sufficient to do a service to her who stands in thy place, in thy lawful inheritance?"

"The violence meditated by Geoffrey de Malduit," replied Cædmon, "is alike disgraceful to honour and to manhood. I see only in the unhappy lady who is the principal object of it, a helpless and persecuted woman. For the Lady Alicia de Beaumont, though she is in possession of the castle that, by right, should be mine, yet never has been to me a personal foe. I quarrel not with her, because ill fate to our house, and his sovereign's favour, gave to her husband Wilsworthy and all its broad lands. Both ladies now, therefore, come before my view as women in danger, threatened by a cruel foe to their honour and their peace. It becomes the grandson of Oswy to prove to the world he has not lost his father's spirit with his father's lands. Tell me what to do, and I will spare neither heart nor hand in their service."

"Mount thy horse; give the spur to his sides and thy best spirit to the enterprise, and never spare thy steed till thou art

at Wilsworthy. Demand instant admission to the Lady Alicia, tell her that she owes to one of the despised Saxon race the safety of her own life and the preservation of the Lady Adela ; tell all I have this day told to thee. If thou art swift, there may even yet be time for the warning. I dare trust thee, and thee alone, on such an errand ; for thou art faithful. I will assist thee to arm, for thou mayest meet enemies in thy path."

The sibyl did so ; and Cædmon was speedily equipped in the armour of Wulfred. He was about to mount his horse, when suddenly a sound as of rushing in the air was heard above their heads. Looking upward they beheld the outspread and dusky wings of a black eagle, the sovereign of these mountain solitudes, and at the period of which we write, a bird not uncommon amongst the rocky crags and majestic tors of Dartmoor. The eagle screamed, as she darted forward, and in another instant soaring to a height that the eye strained to reach in following her flight, at length dropped in the far distance ; no doubt having fastened on some prey.

The Saxon sibyl looked on the circumstance with a prophetic eye. "It is well," she said ; "thou art favoured, brave youth ; the omen never yet failed. There is wrath in the fates, but not to thee. Follow in the direction in which the bird made her flight, and thou shalt prosper. The prey has not escaped her beak and talons, nor shall Geoffrey de Malduit escape thee. Farewell, and remember thou hast ever a friend in Thorbiorga, seek her when thou wilt, in her cell among the rocks."

So saying, she waved her hand ; Cædmon answered with a kindly farewell, and mounting his horse, set off at as rapid a pace as the steep descent amongst the fragments of broken rock that lay scattered round would admit, determined to follow to the letter the instructions of the sibyl.

Cædmon had made his way across the moor, to a point where a small valley terminated a wild and desolate tract of country.

A wood, neither thick nor very extensive, skirted it on the side nearest to the river Tavy, which here made its picturesque course. A turn in the path entered upon a part of the road which, from having a high bank on the one side, and some rocks and oaks on the other, had the character of a defile or pass.

As he approached this spot, Cædmon heard the clash of arms; and a bugle wound its long note, that rang over wood and plain, while confused sounds, shouts, and exclamations became audible and mingled themselves in the din of battle.

"It is Geoffrey de Malduit," thought Cædmon; "he has availed himself of this pass to stop the ladies and their people;" and setting spurs to his horse, in a few minutes he was within full view of the fray. He saw, however, no women. The contest was with men, fierce, yet in numbers few. As he approached nearer, a glance at the arms and shield of a mounted warrior, who was vigorously encountering an enemy, informed him at once that the assailed was Sir Henry de Pomeroy, who had with him but a few supporters and his two esquires of the body.

Opposed to him was the assailant Geoffrey de Malduit, and his band of recreants and followers with their shields covered with black cloth.

In another moment Cædmon was at the side of Sir Henry, whose sword had played him false, for it had broken on receiving a blow from an axe that was wielded by the ferocious Geoffrey. In this dilemma, ere Sir Henry could avail himself of another weapon that hung at his saddle-bow, De Malduit raised his axe, prepared to deal a second and fatal blow. Cædmon saw the danger, swift as thought flew to the rescue, and interposed between De Pomeroy and death. He dashed forward in front of Sir Henry's horse, and received on his own shield the blow that was intended for the young and gallant knight.

Geoffrey, incensed at being thus deprived of his prey, now

turned all his fury on the youth who had snatched it from him—who had thus come between “the lion and his wrath,” and with a second blow struck Cædmon on the head. He was instantly stunned and fell to the ground, as an arrow from another hand penetrated his breast.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy saw the fearful stroke which smote the Saxon, and called to his people to preserve the body of Cædmon from being trampled on by the horses. One of his followers succeeded in dragging it out of immediate danger from the press, to a spot near at hand, where Cædmon lay, insensible, but protected by an overhanging rock. There the follower left him, and returned to the scene of action.

We must here pause to say that the quarrel had been unpremeditated; Sir Henry de Pomeroy having that morning accidentally encountered his enemy, as Geoffrey was on his way to intercept the Lady Alicia and her unhappy ward. Sir Henry was on his road to Wilsworthy (after leaving the abbey, where he lodged on the previous night), in the hope to procure an interview with the inflexible guardian of his beloved Adela. Cædmon had given his aid soon after the beginning of the fray.

And now, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, prompt in extremity, in a moment assumed the direction of the contest. The huge shields of his assailants, with their sable covering, were borne before breasts little in accord with the true spirit of chivalry. A cloud of arrows, thick as hail, fell sharply on him and his party, as a reinforcement of the enemy came up from the wood. Suddenly a well-directed blow from the battle-axe of De Pomeroy cleft the helmet of De Malduit, who fell to the ground. This circumstance changed entirely the fortunes of the day. The followers of De Malduit secured their vanquished chief, who was severely, though not mortally wounded, and retreated in no very honourable manner from the Battle of Black Shields.

No sooner had they done so, than Sir Henry de Pomeroy,

more anxious, if he might be, to save the life of Cædmon than to follow the retreat of so despicable an enemy, caused his body to be carefully raised, and bore him alive, but most dangerously wounded, from the field; and there we must leave him, whilst we say a few words respecting the unfortunate Lady Adela.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

Rude was his garment, and to rags all rent,  
Ne better had he, ne for better cared ;  
With blister'd hands emongst the cinders brent,  
And fingers filthie, with long nailes unpared,  
Right fit to rend the food on which he fared ;  
His name was Care ; a blacksmith by his trade,  
That neither day nor night from working spared,  
But to small purpose yron wedges made ;  
Those be unquiet thoughts that careful minds invade.  
*SPENSER'S Fairy Queen.*

IN speaking of the Lady Adela we must retrograde a little, and mention circumstances which happened before the day appointed for her quitting the castle.

On the return of Patch from his mission, her faithful attendant, Grace, had duly reported to her that the letter had been conveyed to Cædmon, as she directed, with all caution ; and the noble Saxon had promised to deliver it with no less secrecy into the hands of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, and into those of no other person.

Satisfied on these points, the Lady Adela never doubted the rest, and felt convinced in her own mind that Sir Henry de Pomeroy would make some bold attempt for her deliverance. In what way it would be made must be to her a mystery, but she confided in the hope, prayed for its success, and counted the hours as they flew towards her rescue. Yet, though she hoped, she was not cheerful ; a lurking spirit of melancholy, even in

her happiest moments, lay deep within her bosom, and forbade her, under any circumstances, to feel very joyous.

On the day previous to her expected departure, she was more than ever depressed in spirits, for, alas ! no tidings had she received from Sir Henry, and all about him was wrapped in uncertainty and doubt, those twin offsprings of the old "blacksmith" whose name is "Care," so admirably described by the ancient poet :

Those be unquiet thoughts that careful minds invade.

During the whole of this day the aunt and niece had shunned each other, for each felt she had something to hide from the knowledge of the other ; and therefore avoided as much as possible an intercourse which must be artificial, whence the spontaneous expressions arising from unguarded thoughts and feelings must be banished, and where the confidence of old times no longer could exist.

They met almost in silence, and had recourse to a well-mannered reserve, as a shelter from that renewal of familiarity which both seemed to dread. Each was determined in her purpose, the one to enforce the convent, and the other, if possible, to escape it ; no wonder, therefore, each feared that burst of feeling, which, setting at naught all the efforts of self-control, is generally followed by a candid communication of purposes and desires, springing from the inmost recesses of the heart.

They said little during supper ; their manner was studiously courteous ; but it never once relaxed—never so unbent as to allow either to touch on any subject of discourse that would awaken the sensibilities of woman. They were calm and friendly ; and as the Lady Alicia took pains to keep about her the ladies and the chaplain, who also supped at the same table, the awkwardness of being left alone with Adela, under such circumstances, was completely avoided.

The hour of rest drew nigh, and as the unhappy girl was to depart at early dawn, her guardian felt she must now submit to



the ceremony of taking leave of her. She summoned, therefore, the utmost resolution to her aid, and bore her part in these, the most trying moments of the evening, with her accustomed ease.

But the less-practised heart of Adela could not so master or mask its real feelings, and she burst into tears as she folded her arms around her guardian's neck and earnestly and affectionately begged her blessing. The Lady Alicia gave it with an impressive solemnity of aspect, yet she said little; she dared not trust herself with many words, but she looked disturbed, whilst she once more gave a last adieu to Adela, and under pretext that she should hasten to take rest to prepare her for her journey on the morrow, hurried her from the room to the melancholy solitude of her own apartment, where she never once closed her eyes during the night.

On the morrow at an early hour, as arranged, and under a strong guard, she set out for St. Michael's.

The Mount, though now but an isolated rock, showing its castle-crowned crest in the midst of the sea, was once, according to tradition, an inland rocky eminence, rising in an extensive plain. In ages so remote that no record exists respecting them, the encroachment of the waves upon this extensive flat is believed by geologists to have completely changed the scene, and to have brought the combined waters of the British, Irish, and Atlantic oceans to insulate the rock, and to form that bay which is now one of the most beautiful in Europe.

From the earliest times, the Mount has been celebrated as a place chosen for the rites of superstition. During the sway of the ancient British priesthood, it was dedicated to Belus, or the sun, and committed to the charge of a band of female Druids, amongst whom the most aged was held a prophetess, and delivered her predictions from the apex of the Mount, or there performed the cruel and unhallowed rites of human sacrifice. One of the most ancient names of the rock, in all probability, alludes to this practice, as it signified, in the

Cornish tongue, "The mountain tomb." It was not, however, permitted to remain for ever in ignorance of the true faith. According to a tradition still current in the West, about the year of our Lord 495, a holy hermit retired hither, and the apparition of St. Michael the Archangel appearing to him in a vision of the night, he named the Mount after his glorified visitant, and in a few years a monastery was erected on the sacred spot. To this Milton alludes in his "Lycidas," when he speaks of :

The great vision of the guarded mount.

Hence was it, from a very early period, consecrated to the worship of the Christian faith, and it soon rose into great celebrity as a place of pilgrimage. Indeed, so famous was it in this respect, that during the Middle Ages (and till the time of the Reformation), thousands and thousands of both sexes made their way to the shrine of St. Michael, and such immunities had been granted to it by Gregory and other Popes, that a third part of his penances was remitted to every sinner who there made his prayers and oblations on the day of the Archangel, or on the Eve of St. John. William, Earl of Mortaigne and Cornwall, and nephew of William the Conqueror, founded in the Mount a cell for hermitical monks; and soon after, a nunnery was founded and endowed on the same spot, as the ancient chronicler says, "being placed contiguous to the monastery, in order to prove the superiority of the spirit, and the triumphs of the mind over the senses, according to the improved plan commended by Gilbert of Sempringham, in the year 1148." The nuns were Cistercian. But we will not follow up this subject; we will not trench on the records of the historian more than is absolutely necessary for the purposes of our tale.

St. Michael's Mount is an object fitted for the pencil of the painter, or the imagination of the poet. It is of no great height, being not much more than two hundred feet above the level of the sea. The castle, the chapel, the ancient

buildings with which it is crowned ; the broken, shattered, and jagged masses of granite of which it is composed, from the base to the summit ; the sea for ever breaking over the lower portions of the rocks ; the vast expanse of ocean, the beautiful bay, and the distant view of Penzance, with the villages and hamlets that skirt the shores, are all striking, and combine to form a truly noble picture, rendered the more imposing by the air of defiance which distinguishes the old and weather-beaten watch-towers of the castle. The spells of antiquity, than which none are more potent with the poetic mind, seem to hang about the warlike Mount, and when the tide is up, and it is surrounded by its girdle of waters, cutting off all communication with the land, the interest is complete, and becomes invested with a character of wonder and of awe.

In one of the cells belonging to the nuns of St. Michael, which looked out on the broad ocean, above the brow of the old rock, soon after the events related in the opening of this chapter, a female sat before its little window, with her eyes fixed on the scene around. The alternate agitation and repose of the waves appeared to engage her thoughtful and melancholy spirit. She was dressed in the white gown, the black scapula, and the white mantle and veil of a novice. In her hand she held a rosary, and, after a while, by the motion of her fingers, she seemed to be telling her beads, as the rule under which she had commenced her noviciate required she should do, at certain hours of the day. But though her fingers moved, they did so mechanically, for her thoughts seemed still to wander over the broad ocean, and to give that liberty to the mind which was denied to the person of the captive in her cell. Need the reader be told it was the Lady Adela who thus mused ?

The hour was one of deep repose ; the sun was slowly sinking behind masses of fleecy clouds, and as he descended lower and lower towards the watery horizon, the effects of the glowing light and of the increasing shadows gave a character of indescribable majesty to the scene.

There are moments when the very hopelessness of our dis-

treas gives a calm to the mind, which it cannot receive under less calamitous, but more agitating circumstances. Even so was it now with the Lady Adela; she had already been long enough in the convent to experience the severity of those means, exercised by a haughty and unsparing superior, of extinguishing all hope of finally escaping her toils. Accustomed from her earliest years to be absolutely under the command of another, and of a passive temper, gentle even to timidity, deeply impressed with the most reverential ideas of duty, Adela did not dream of resistance. She thought only of her unhappy lot, and in the calm of her despair, indulged a fond but fruitless regret for the past.

In this state of mind, she had of late found some temporary relief in contemplating, at the evening hour, that ocean which is so fertile in supplying images to the mind imbued with a depth of feeling which enables it to commune with the poetry of nature. Indeed so noble are the emotions arising from a contemplation of the vast and the sublime, that, for the moment, the afflicted spirit seems to quit its narrow house, to soar on the wing of the seraph, and to be with God alone.

The rush of the sounding waves, the screams of the sea-mew, as they circled among the clouds, or winged their way to their nests in the rocks that beetled over the "salt flood,"—the interminable expanse of waters, mingling, as it were, with the heavens above,—all impressed her mind with feelings of the deepest reverence; and amidst the majesty of creation, the spirit of Adela felt, for a while, as if it were placed beyond the tyranny of man.

"Alas!" said Adela, giving utterance to her sad thoughts, "what is it I regret? A few years of life that I had hoped to pass in the world with all I loved, and with one——" she paused—tears rose in her eyes—she wiped them off and said, "wherefore should I regret him, since Time has no stay, and ever takes in his flight more than he gives? Had I continued the world, in a few years, I might, perhaps, have lost all I

there loved, and have been left to strive alone on the waters of life !”

As Adela (who, like many a prisoner, had acquired the habit of sometimes giving utterance, in her loneliness, to the musings of her mind) finished this sentence, a voice exclaimed—“The waters of life, dear lady? Why, if you mean yonder wide, dreary, and dismal sea, that I am weary of looking at from morning till night, you had better call it the waters of Babylon, beside which, as old Father Hilary used to tell us, the captive Jews sat down and wept. If it were not that I try to look cheerful, because you look so melancholy and miserable, I should have cried my eyes out before now, for being shut up in this dreadful old place, perched up upon a rock, like a parcel of sea-gulls; only we are not so well off as they, because we have no wings to fly away from it.”

Adela turned her head towards the well-known speaker, and the rosy, half-crying, half-smiling, plump, and good-humoured face of Grace Bolt appeared, in the midst of such a nun’s dress as was worn by the lay sisters, who did the menial offices of the house. Such a face as that of Grace, surrounded by a white chin-cloth and a dismal black veil, with not a bit of her hair to be seen, looked most comically out of place—as much so as the chubby cheeks of a boy, intended to represent a cherub, but far more resembling an infant Bacchus, which may now and then be seen decorating the mortuary stones or pillars of a churchyard. It surprised even her mistress, who exclaimed :

“How now, Grace! who has put you on such a dress as this?”

“Why, my Lady Abbess, to be sure,” answered Grace; “she who puts on us all the dismal things of this place. And it is all for your sake, my dear young lady, that I bear it; or not the best lady abbess that ever wore a head, should have put such a dark, ugly, coarse, shapeless-looking gown over my back, I do assure you; and not to let a bit of one’s hair be seen either—as if my hair were as gray as her own. I declare I didn’t know myself again, when I took a peep in the only mirror that I have

yet seen in the house, that which hangs at the back of the image of Our Lady in the little side-chapel. Well, to be sure, it's something to console one for having no young pages here to look at one; for I would not be seen in such a Witch of Endor's dress for all the world."

"It was kind in you, my dear Grace," said the Lady Adela, "not to leave me; for indeed I could not bear to part from you; and yet to continue to keep you here against your will would be most unkind."

"It would be a downright robbing and murdering of me, my dear lady," said Grace: "robbing me of the liberty God gave me to look on the face of my fellow-creatures; that is, of one-half of my fellow-creatures, for here we see nothing but women, and they as miserable as ourselves. But I don't mean to stay here, nor to let you either, one hour more than is necessary to make our escape; and then, dear lady, pluck up a good spirit, and we will cross the seas, get into Normandy, and you shall take possession of your own castle and vassals, and leave the old abbess here to scream after us, with the gulls, when we are fled and away."

"Alas! there is no hope of escape," said Adela; "else, rather than submit to have vows forced upon me, that my whole heart disclaims, I would attempt it. But hope there is none."

"None!" said Grace; "there is hope, and I would find her and have her up, though she had sunk down with her anchor, that the minstrels sing about, to the bottom of Mount's Bay. Only cheer up, my lady, take a good heart, and hold yourself prepared; for I am on the watch, and if an opportunity presents itself, and if it can only be got at through a keyhole, it shall set us free. I have news for you, my lady, great news."

"How! what mean you?"

"Do you see yonder galley, dear lady?"

"I do," said Adela; "I have watched its course for the last hour, as it rode into the bay. What of her?"

"She contains," replied Grace, "so was I told but now in the locutory—she contains a band of King Richard's men-at-arms, all coming to this rock; that is, to the little fortress which stands upon it."

"Well, and what is that to us?" said Adela: "men-at-arms will not be suffered to come near a convent of nuns; and on the summit of the Mount they can do me no more service than if they were in Syria."

"I do not know that," replied Grace. "I, being no novice, only one of the discreet, or what-do-you-call-them sisters, am under no sort of vows. So there can be no harm done to me—no whipping or walling me up alive, if I do steal out of the convent and make an acquaintance with a bold archer or two, who can draw a good bow, and let slip a cloth-yard arrow, for merry England."

"But they could do nothing for us, Grace," said the Lady Adela, "they would feel no sympathy with our distressed state."

"Oh! let me try for that, my dear lady," said Grace; and she added, raising her head and smiling: "I have known the time when a bold archer would have given a helping hand to fetch me out of durance, if I had ever been in it, for the sake of a little innocent kindness, and a good word or so from me. I will not despair even now, though I have got on this black veil and old gray gown, only fit for an Ash-Wednesday, when one does not care what one wears, when one has to lie down on the church pavement maybe, and have ashes sprinkled all over one."

"Your hopes, Grace, are wild and vain," said the Lady Adela: "they are the hopes of despair, not of probability."

"I will say no more about them, then, for the present," answered Grace. "Deeds, and not words, should be my motto, if I were a young knight and bore a shield."

"And wherefore do these men-at-arms come hither?" inquired Adela; "hast thou heard?"

"A report is rife in these parts," answered Grace, "though

nobody seems to know whence it arose, and it was only told to-day in the locutory, and it flew thence to the kitchen, and there I heard it,—a report is rife that the discontents of some of the Norman barons, enemies to Richard, are daily gaining ground in the West, and that intelligence has been received of a plan in agitation to seize on all the strongholds for Prince John, Earl of Mortaigne, and to make him king instead of his brother Richard. And so, Mount St. Michael not being considered to be strongly enough guarded, the constable of Pendennis Castle has manned a galley with men-at-arms, and has sent them to reinforce the fortress here, in order that the Mount may be able to hold fast its allegiance to King Richard."

"I am glad of it," said Adela; "and I pray the saints and angels that the royal and brave Richard may preserve his throne unshaken by his most rebellious and unnatural brother. When do these men-at-arms land?"

"You shall hear," said Grace. "To-morrow, being a great day with the pilgrims, the lady abbess fears that the landing of the men-at-arms, before that day is passed, would be attended with much confusion, possibly with disorder: she has therefore sent her own chaplain to the captain of the men-at-arms to pray him to forbear to land his people till after the morrow; meanwhile the vessel is to anchor at Mouse Hole, a place among the rocks opposite the anchorage of the Mount. However, so short a delay in the landing of the king's men cannot affect us; and, for my own part, I expect so much from their help that I have left off crying ever since I heard of the arrival of the vessel."

"I wish I could hope also," said Adela; "but, alas! when my kinswoman and guardian, the Lady Alicia, condemned me to these walls, she compelled me to leave all hope, with my affections, at Wilsworthy."

"You shall not say so," replied Grace. "I will never believe but that Sir Henry will be as true to you, as, I dare say, Patch is to me, and that all will yet be well with us. I often think of



the poor fool, and the goodwill with which he took charge of the letter for Sir Henry de Pomeroy. But it never could have reached him, that's certain. Well, we must all part, to be sure, one time or another ; and, perhaps, I may find a friend amongst King Richard's archers, if I can but win speech with them, who will be as willing to serve me as was the kind fool. And maybe, you, my lady, if it comes to the worst, and you cannot have Sir Henry de Pomeroy, maybe, you will find some young knight, who will be just such another, as gallant and as handsome ; and, if we can but once steal away from this place——"

"Do not talk thus, Grace," said the Lady Adela ; "I have neither hopes nor plans for myself ; my hope is alone in heaven."

"And mine, just now, with Our Lady's leave, on yonder sea," replied Grace. "Let us step out on the terrace, and look at the galley yonder ; it will do your heart good to see her streamers, and to hear the voices of her people as they come up from below, borne on the wind to the top of this old rock."

Adela consented, gave her hand, and was led forth by her faithful attendant ; and from the ancient Gothic terrace which stood near the chapel, at the summit of the Mount, contemplated the ocean and the vessel, which seemed to be "sleeping on her shadow," as the sun declined lower and lower in the horizon, till the glorious orb was at last seen to sink into the bosom of the deep, and all the surrounding scene, earth, sea, and sky, became hushed into repose.

## CHAPTER XXV.

My master is of churlish disposition,  
And little recks to find the way to heaven  
By doing deeds of hospitality.

I charge thee invite them all : let in the tide  
Of knaves once more ; my cook and I'll provide.

SHAKESPEARE.

THE Eve of St. John, from time immemorial, was celebrated at Penzance, and in the hamlets and villages along the shores of Mount's Bay ; and though the celebration of that day was introduced into the Christian calendar under the protection of St. John the Baptist, the ceremonies observed upon it are considered by learned antiquaries to be of a much earlier date than the introduction of Christianity into these kingdoms. They are believed to have their origin in British times, and to be nothing less than a vestige of the fires kindled in honour of Belus, or the sun, whose influence is greatest at the summer solstice, and whose godlike power to cheer the earth was duly honoured by the priestesses of the sacred Mount.

The ceremonies to which we allude (not even wholly extinct at the present time) during the twelfth century were at their height, and were at once wild, enthusiastic, and impressive.

Towards the close of day (on the Eve of St. John), it was the custom of the fishermen and the humbler classes to pile immense heaps of wood, and to fix tar-barrels to the tops of long poles,

and so to place them at equal distances along the shores of Mount's Bay. At nightfall, these combustibles were set on fire along the whole line of coast. The lengthened reflection of the flames upon the waters of the bay became so multiplied that the very ocean seemed to be changed into a sea of lava, glowing like a furnace, fiery red.

This extraordinary spectacle was rendered complete by the conduct of the men and women who were the principal actors in the scene. The former bore lighted torches; and the latter, with their hair long and loose, uniting themselves into circles, sang, danced and yelled, as the men, whirling their lighted brands with great velocity aloft, shouted in a manner so wild and frantic, that the scene has been compared by Gilbert to the fifth day of "the Eleusinian Feast, or the Day of Torches; because, at night, men and women ran about with them, in imitation of Ceres, who having lighted a torch at the fire of Mount Ætna, wandered about from place to place, in search of her daughter Proserpine."

To prepare for the Eve of St. John, at the time we open this chapter, was the great object of all the villages, towns, and hamlets along Mount's Bay, and many pilgrims and palmers were seen making their way to the holy Mount of St. Michael.

In the small town of M<sup>a</sup>g<sup>a</sup>zian,\* or Market Jew, at the date of our tale, very few houses were inhabited by Christians, and these were principally kept for the accommodation of such

\* "M<sup>a</sup>g<sup>a</sup>zian, formerly Market Jew, originated from its early market for tin, chiefly engrossed by the Jews. Here they sold various commodities, purchased tin, and carried on a most lucrative traffic for several centuries, admitting no other people to share in the profits of their concerns."—*Gilbert's "History of Cornwall."*

Sir Walter Scott, in his admirable romance of "Ivanhoe," has painted in so lively a manner the persecution to which the Jews were subjected during the twelfth century, that little need here be said on the subject to the reader. But it is to the honour of Cornwall, that, whilst maltreated, robbed, and murdered by Christians, in almost every other part of the kingdom, the unhappy Jews found a retreat of comparative safety at Market Jew in that county.

pilgrims as bent their steps to the chapel (on the holy Mount) on the great days of the year. These places of public reception sometimes happened to be so full that the late comers had no choice but to remain unhoused, or to take up their temporary quarters under the roof of some despised and unhallowed Israelite. This was so often the case, that at last the Jews of M<sup>a</sup>razion found the days of St. Michael and the Eve of St. John festivals of no inconsiderable profit to themselves.

St. Michael's Mount is, alternately, as the tide flows and ebbs, either an island or a peninsula; being connected with the land at Market Jew (now M<sup>a</sup>razion) by a large causeway of sand, rocks, and stones, about fifty yards in width, and eight hundred in length.

In calm weather this causeway may be passed with perfect ease and safety, during the absence of the tide. But when the winds are up, and the sea is rough, the isthmus is completely covered, even at low water, and the rock of St. Michael appears as an island surrounded by a stormy ocean, for many days, and sometimes even weeks together.\*

Most of the pilgrims who visited the Mount observed the time of tide, and by crossing the isthmus at low water on foot, reached it in safety when the weather was calm. But many crossed on horses, which they hired for the purpose in Market Jew; and these animals on their arrival at the Mount, were regularly stabled at a place of accommodation erected for the purpose near the foot of the rock, as the path was too narrow, precipitous, and craggy to allow any one to ride up to the castle convent, or chapel, on his steed.

Many pilgrims had pressed into Market Jew, as the fishermen and mariners, usually engaged in their craft, were busied in making their preparations to celebrate the evening in the wild manner we have described.

Hitherto most of the pilgrims of both sexes had come on foot; at length a small band mounted on horseback, were seen

\* "It is now," says a recent observer, "passable only about two-thirds of a day, when the weather is perfectly calm."

winding down the side of a gentle hill, towards the town. They were dressed in gray frocks, had their hoods drawn close over their heads, scarcely allowing any part of their faces, except their eyes, to be seen ; and, from the steadiness, indeed the solemnity of their demeanour, they appeared to be penitents of no ordinary description.

On arriving in the town, they could find no lodgment in the houses kept by the Christians ; all were full. After many inquiries they at length made their way to a house that belonged to a Jew named Samson, who, with his wife and some of their kindred, there resided, and drove a good trade in the traffic of tin and other matters.

The house stood apart from the town ; it was situated on the beach, and so close to the rocks, by which it was skirted at the end of the isthmus, or causeway, communicating with the Mount, that the dash and roar of the waves, when they beat with fury upon the shore, sounded with full terror to the inhabitants of the dwelling.

The mansion was in other respects well enough ; it was large, ancient, and rambling, and had something of a castellated appearance. A terrace, turreted and battlemented, looked out towards the Mount, and was accessible from the house by a door from one of the principal apartments. A court, guarded by a high wall, and entered by strong gates, was situated on the town side of the building, so that on any occasion of apprehension, Samson could, for a while at least, render his house his castle.

But as all attempts at resistance on the part of the abused children of Israel were sure at this period to be requited with the most cruel exercise of arbitrary power, the prudent Samson, unlike his great namesake, never became warlike, except on occasions of immediate danger, or of stern and absolute necessity. At all other times he was a man of peace, having in himself all the usual characteristics of his people, in a season of universal suffering and degradation with their unhappy race.

Samson had the keen eye for gain, the jealousy of observation, the ever active suspicion, the subtle dealing, and the mean cunning, which, almost without exception, distinguished those outcasts of Judæa, who, during the twelfth century, were wanderers over the face of the whole earth. Nor were the unhappy Jews to be too severely censured for faults that arose from the ferocious prejudices, the inhumanity and injustice of the Christians.

Yet their passiveness, their industry, their prudence and spirit for commercial enterprise, their determined adherence to the prejudices of their nation, with their wonderful command of money, and credit, altogether made them so useful to their Christian tyrants, that they were alternately encouraged, tolerated, caressed, robbed, persecuted, and even murdered, as the predominant interest of those who so used them might prevail.\*

Samson was, in his day, one of the greatest tin merchants and miners of Cornwall; and so useful had he been as a money-lender, that certain abbeys (whose superiors were more lavish in their expenditure than nice in the means of supplying it) had received episcopal censure for contracting loans at a usurious rate of interest with Samson the Jew. This circumstance, inducing at least a degree of intercourse between the Israelitish money-lender and the abbeys, might have rendered Samson the less reluctant to accommodate a Christian pilgrim or two, in a case of necessity. Be this as it may, he was now called on to do so by the band of mounted pilgrims we have just named, who purposed merely to rest under the shelter of his roof, till a certain hour in the afternoon, when they intended to cross the isthmus to the Mount.

Their summons at the portal of Samson was tardily

\* Hollinshed mentions the dreadful manner in which some thousand Jews in England were robbed and murdered by certain knights, previously to their expedition to the Holy Land, in the twelfth century. There is every cause to believe the Jews of Market Jew, Cornwall, escaped these injuries at the period just named.

answered ; and, ere the gates were slowly unbarred, a pair of black eyes keenly scrutinised them from a small grating, at the side of the oaken and nail-headed door.

The door was at length opened, and Samson stood before them. He was lean and gaunt ; and a spirit of subtlety, ever watchful for gain, or for suspicion, seemed to lurk in his contracted lids, as the dark eye beneath darted forth keen glances of observation.

He was dressed in a gown of black serge, bound round the middle with an embroidered girdle ; his head was bare, for he hated to place on it the yellow cap which, by law, the Jews of this period were compelled to adopt, as a mark of their disgrace.

His leanness, a sternness of countenance, which not even his lowliness of manner could wholly overcome, and his hollow-set eyes, altogether presented a face that had in it something wildly characteristic. In moments of less interest, those who had now gained admission at his house would have looked upon such a man as Samson with no common degree of curiosity ; but as it was, they were too much bent on their own purposes to heed him.

The pilgrim who acted as spokesman for the rest, appeared to be the leader of the party. He requested that they might all be accommodated with house-room and refreshment, and that he and one of his companions might be conducted into an apartment by themselves. As he spoke, the leader threw somewhat back his hood, and the Jew gave him a look of yet nicer scrutiny, but withdrew his eyes, and fixed them on the ground the instant he saw that he was observed.

All was done as had been requested ; and the principal pilgrim, with his chosen companion, was conducted into a large old chamber that opened on the terrace fronting the Mount. They stepped out upon it as soon as they entered, and looking towards the rock commenced an earnest conversation, with which at present we have no concern ; but we must now attend Samson the Jew, and see how he took the arrival of these pilgrim claimants on his hospitality.

He seemed not to like them ; but he was too much governed by fear to express his disapprobation to any but his wife. After having seen them all accommodated, he sought his spouse Miriam in her own apartment. She was somewhat advanced in life, though not very old ; she had a noble person, and appeared to be an Israelite of a better order than her husband. She was rather richly attired in velvet of Genoa, and her head was covered by a long veil that hung down her back and nearly touched the floor. A rich border, composed of the most brilliant feathers of foreign birds, ornamented her kirtle, and a long tippet of the same was thrown across her shoulders. A couple of very small steel mirrors were fastened in her sleeves, like brooches, to confine their fulness, a fashion with the Jewish women of her day, that was derived from the highest antiquity. She was busied in preparing, with much care, a decoction from some herbs that lay in a basket.

"Miriam," said her husband, addressing her as he entered ; "Miriam—but on this day I should rather call thee Mara, for the God of Israel hath, I fear, dealt very bitterly with us. He hath brought spies upon us ; they are even now under our roof."

"Spies !" exclaimed Miriam ; "spies ! surely not, my husband. I saw but a band of harmless Christians, who come here to worship the angel Michael in yonder Mount. Spies I trust they are not. It is thy fear, husband, that makes them seem such to thee."

"It is not so," replied Samson. "Holy Abraham, I would it were no other ! Yet, Miriam, the mischief that I fear is not to us ; my fear is for one now under our roof, to whom thou and I, Miriam, in years long since past, owe the saving of both our lives, and that great recompense beside which she made to thee for the service thou didst her in Normandy ; the service, I mean, in respect to the Christian infant, the female child."

"You speak of the Lady Alicia," said Miriam. "She hath good reason, indeed, that the world should not know that she



sojourns in the house of Samson the Jew. I have placed the noble Nazarene lady in a chamber above, by herself, where no one but myself and the damsel Orpha can resort to her. No one who comes hither can disturb her repose or intrude upon her sorrows. Whatever may be her sins to her own people, the lady has been good to us, and we owe to her all we possess."

"Yea, under favour of the God of Abraham," said Samson, "she touched the heart of a cruel enemy, so that it softened at the last; like the heart of Pharaoh when he let the children of Israel go. To the Lady Alicia do we owe, under God, the very breath of our nostrils. I have not, and will not, forget this act of the Christian lady. How does she now?"

"She sleeps," said Miriam; "last night she did not rest well. She will tarry here for a few days, till she has visited the unhappy Lady Adela."

"We must be wary," said Samson. "What would she say did she know that one is here, here in this very house, whom she would least desire to see in the neighbourhood of yonder Mount?"

"Of whom speak you?" inquired Miriam.

"Hark in thine ear."

Samson stooped, whispered; Miriam started.

"Holy Father Abraham," she said, "this is an unlooked-for evil! But I will be on the watch: the lady and he shall not meet. She shall not know of his presence: that is, not know of it, unless one thing should happen—and then——"

"It must not be," said Samson. "If this thing is noised abroad, it may bring the power of the county upon my house. My goods and my monies may be forfeited, and we may both again suffer durance."

"The strait is a narrow one," said Miriam; "but fear not, husband, we will be cautious; and we are too much accustomed to danger and sudden perils to be startled by them now."

"Do you then, Miriam, look to the lady," said Samson,

"and I will keep watch over these pilgrims till they depart ; that will be in a few hours. I will, also, keep an eye to the pelf ; for hast thou not heard, that there are King Richard's men-at-arms coming to yonder Mount?"

"Thou art right, husband," said Miriam : "they are cruel men of war."

"Ay," said Samson, "these men-at-arms shall not come within my gates for fellowship ; but I say not that I will close my heart against them for thrift or traffic. Wealth honestly gained hath upon it the blessing of increase."

"Sevenfold hath been thine, husband," said Miriam.

"And I will watch to keep it mine with eye, and hand, and wit," said the Jew ; and proceeding to unlock a large chest that was in the room, he took from it several bags of weight, rich caskets, and other valuables ; and then, touching a secret spring in the wall, a panel slipped aside, and disclosed a hollow large enough to be capable on any emergency of hiding away not only goods, but even one or two persons who might wish for temporary concealment during a search.

Here Samson proceeded to deposit several of his valuables, and, as he did so, he muttered, more as if thinking aloud than talking to Miriam :

"Here lie bonds that are as the very life-blood of spendthrift heirs, their whole substance put out to pledge to the despised Jew ! Here are the very souls of misers—parchments lacking payment for redemption ; and here is the hope of many a fool, who has given in stake his good lands in England, that he may have gold to equip him and his followers, to regain an empty tomb in that holy city where once the anointed kings of Israel held the sceptre of Jerusalem, till Jehovah, in His fierce wrath, bade that city and her princes, for her pride and oppression, to come down and sit in the dust."

"Alas, for Zion !" said Miriam. "When I think on thee, my very heart bleeds for the desolation of Israel, and I could, even as did her children in captivity in a strange land, take up

my song of mourning, and find no joy in my people, whilst away from that pleasant home."

Samson sighed deeply, but did not answer; he then made fast his secret store, and left Miriam to attend on the Lady Alicia, whilst he went to look after his pilgrim guests, with a watchful and jealous spirit.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

But screw your courage to the sticking place,  
And we'll not fail.  
Now sits expectation in the air,  
And hides a sword, from hilt unto the point,  
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets  
Promised to Harry and his followers.

SHAKSPERE.

At the proper hour for crossing the isthmus, the band of pilgrims, with hoods drawn close over their heads, quitted the house of Samson the Jew. The leader of the band and his chosen companion went a little forward before the rest ; all were mounted.

The two foremost rode slowly, side by side, over the rocks. There was a pause in their discourse ; till, at length, the elder broke silence.

“What we do, we must do suddenly. I know the enterprise is desperate ; so is the occasion for it. The men-at-arms in yonder galley will land on the morrow ; and then it would be mere madness to make our attempt. Thanks, however, to the whimsical old abbess, for one hope in our enterprise ; since, as I have learnt, she will not suffer the reinforcement to land on this holy Mount till after the Eve of St. John. Ere that eve be spent, we shall, I trust, have captured this stronghold for the Earl of Mortaigne.”

“Yet not for the Earl of Mortaigne, noble Sir Henry,—not

for the sake of that rebellious prince, rebellious to his lion-hearted brother, would I have joined your expedition," said Cædmon. "It is my sense of the gratitude that I owe to you, who never ceased to watch over me, when I lay sick and wounded nearly to death. Were it otherwise, it is not for Prince John, nor for his cause, that I would draw a sword."

"I care not for whom you draw it, Cædmon, so that you this day strike a good blow with it, by my side. Yet you may combat for me and the Lady Adela alone; since to gain possession of the Mount is the only means left me to set her at liberty. There is another circumstance also, by which I am, in honour, pledged to appear on this day at the chapel in yonder Mount."

Sir Henry then briefly narrated to Cædmon the circumstances of his interview with the palmer, with which the reader is already acquainted.

They passed rapidly over the remainder of the way that lay between them and the rock. They then speedily dismounted, gave their horses in charge to one of their band, who undertook to keep them in readiness at the foot of the Mount (in case any failure should render retreat necessary), and the rest proceeded to the ascent. For some time they pursued it in profound silence; till at length the narrow and crooked path led to the outer portal of the buildings, where a guard was stationed both by day and night. In the course of the ascent, they had to pass a very small and ancient watch-tower, which stood on the extreme verge of a projecting portion of the rock, and overlooked the whole of Mount's Bay.

Before this tower Sir Henry paused for a few minutes, and held a brief conference with Cædmon. Should he at once advance and render himself master of the watch, or should he pass on, in the hope to reach the summit unsuspected? Hitherto not the slightest opposition had been offered to him, or his pilgrim band. Might he not now, therefore, by attempting the watch, unnecessarily cause a sudden alarm, that would bring down the whole strength of the little fortress upon him, before

he stood within its walls?—while, did he now continue quietly his course, it was not only possible, but highly probable, he would achieve his object without interruption; and might accomplish all he had in view without spilling one drop of blood.

This deliberation ended in the resolution to make at once for the great portal, ere himself or his followers drew a sword in their attempt. They passed, therefore, the little watch-tower we have named, in profound silence.

They gained the second ward by a similar winding-path cut in the ascent amid the rocks, forming in parts a hollow way between them. They passed this second ward unsuspected, as before: many saw them, but no notice was taken, as there was nothing more common than to see pilgrims and palmers on the Eve of St. John, ascending to make their prayers and offerings in the chapel.

At length the party so disguised, mounted the last and steepest ascent that brought them to the summit of the rock. They stood on a small level towards the north-west, whence a flight of steps led to the chief portal of the building. Ere they approached it, each man loosed his pilgrim's belt and passed his hand under his cloak, so that he might in an instant draw his sword; and, two and two, once more, and in profound silence, did they proceed, mount the steps, and stand before the great portal that opened into the hall of entrance communicating by passages and galleries with the convent of nuns. Here a guard was stationed, as a portion of the buildings clustered at the summit was of a warlike character, and had been especially erected for the safety of the Mount, to protect it as much from sea pirates as any other foes.

The door readily opened to admit the supposed pilgrims; all passed over the threshold. But no sooner had the door closed than De Pomeroy gave the signal; and in an instant his band disencumbered themselves of their long cloaks, drew their weapons, and rushing on the guard, overpowered them almost before they were aware of danger; so sudden, so determined was

the action. The guard disarmed, the assailants next secured the portal, and made themselves masters of the keys, promising not to injure a hair of the heads of the vanquished, provided they remained quiet; but threatening them with instant death, did they but raise a cry, or move a finger in opposition to their purpose.

The prisoners were bound with the leathern girdles of their vanquishers, and two or three of the band remained to watch over them and keep the gates. Sir Henry de Pomeroy then selected one from among them, and offered him a large reward to act as a guide through the intricacies of the building: his object being to proceed at once to the deliverance of the Lady Adela. Cædmon was one of those left in charge of the prisoners and the gates.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy speedily found himself within the convent part of the building, and in the very first cell to which he forced an entrance, he discovered his beloved Adela, nearly fainting with apprehension from alarm, at this violent entry of her cell by armed men.

As he snatched her to his bosom, he reassured her by the most earnest and affectionate protestations that he would henceforth resign her but with life—that, ere he quitted the house, it was his purpose to secure her his for ever, by seeking out the priest of the convent, and compelling him to perform the marriage rite at the altar of the chapel, and that immediately after he would place her in such safety that all attempts to part him from his bride should be in vain.

He saw her alarm, and entreated her to take courage; and, as she would save herself from becoming a victim to forced vows and perpetual captivity, as she would save him from the despair which the loss of her must inevitably occasion, to compose her mind, call up her resolution, and on the instant accompany him to the altar. He had already dispatched some of his faithful band, who had devoted themselves to his service in carrying forward his enterprise, to find out the priest, who by this time must be awaiting them in the chapel.

Wondering, fearing, scarcely comprehending (in the confusion of mind into which she had been thrown by the suddenness of the transaction) the nature or extent of her deliverance; seeming to be hardly sensible that she was about on the instant to pass from the captivity of a cell to be bound in bonds of the holiest affection to the man she most loved, the agitated Adela gave him, almost in silence, her trembling hand.

Sir Henry now drew her forth from her cell; his band awaited him in the gallery that led to it. They had surprised the priest in his way to the chapel. With fearful threats, should he refuse compliance, had they explained to him the nature of the service he was required to fulfil—their leader had determined to espouse the Lady Adela on the instant, she being his betrothed, who had been brought by his enemies to that convent against her will.

It is almost needless to add, that arguments such as these, made by armed men who seemed prepared for any violence, were not very likely to meet with opposition from a poor old priest, nearly fourscore years of age. He promised compliance, begged those who seized upon him to use no further violence, and not unnecessarily alarm the sisters, who were the timid and harmless inmates of the house. For so sudden had been this surprise, so skilfully arranged, and so resolutely conducted, that all we have related had actually taken place before the alarm had extended to the chapel, where a service, at which the aged priest was about to assist, was going on at the time.

As Adela, leaning on the arm of Sir Henry de Pomeroy, passed towards the chapel, anything but joy filled her mind. She had loved him more than life, she had feared his loss more than death; yet, strange to tell, and she could not account for it, she felt an indescribable reluctance to thus suddenly becoming his wife. She felt at this moment as if the utmost happiness her affection could desire would consist in the delight she took in his presence, sharing his converse, watching



over his welfare, and doing him faithful service. Yet, though she felt all this, she dared not give utterance to such feelings when she thought of the engagement between them that had been so violently broken, without any reason being assigned for it, by the severity of her guardian; she felt she should be ungenerous to her deliverer did she now refuse to receive his vows, as he so earnestly desired, at the altar.

From what motive then could arise her reluctance? for she was not capricious. A strange and undefined feeling, which she could not but consider as a presentiment of sorrow, of sorrow on their union, filled her heart, and a secret foreboding of evil at hand took such strong hold of her mind, that she stepped forward to the nuptial rite, with the downcast and the heavy step of one who advances to a funeral.

Such was the state of the gentle Adela's mind, as she passed under the low doorway which led from the interior of the convent into the chapel.

It was an ancient Saxon building, erected by Edward the Confessor; the columns were of the plain but massive kind, so common with the ecclesiastical edifices of that early date. The image of St. Michael was placed on the altar, in the front of which stood a cross. The windows were high in the walls, and filled with the deepest stained glass, so that the light of the chapel was dull and melancholy, and never visited by the bright beams of a cheerful day.

As Adela and Sir Henry entered, they heard the sounds of the organ, and in a sweet and slow strain there arose from the choir of nuns, who were unseen (being seated behind a large black curtain, which concealed them), a solemn chant. Adela shuddered—stopped—laid her hand on the arm of Sir Henry, and whispered to him, in an accent of deep emotion, "It is a requiem!"

Immediately after, from a soft and melancholy cadence, the requiem rose into a full chorus of majestic sounds. The colour fled from the cheeks of Adela, who became ashy white,

and as she clasped her hands, looked imploringly on Sir Henry and said :

"Oh ! do not disturb the service for the dead. Peace be to the departed ! The nuptial rite should not be ushered in by the song of death. Let us go hence ; this is no time to think of marriage vows."

"But mine are pledged in heaven," replied Sir Henry, with an energy that had in it something of wildness ; "mine are pledged that I will never depart this house till I bear you from it, Adela, as my bride, or am myself borne from it a corpse."

Deeply affected by his words, alarmed by the wildness of his looks and the desperate state of mind which his demeanour did but too plainly express, Adela forbore to say another word, and passively suffering him to do what he pleased, she was led forward to the altar.

With an energy quite in character with what we have already related, supported by his hand, who stood with their drawn weapons around him, and to the horror of the religious part of the assembly, who looked upon the whole scene as little better than sacrilegious, Sir Henry de Pomeroy now declared that he took possession of Mount St. Michael, in the name of John, Earl of Mortaigne, whom he acknowledged as his liege lord, and that, in his absence, he, Henry, Baron of Berry Pomeroy Castle, stood there as its master and as constable of the Mount. That he would injure no one, disturb no one ; that life and property should be safe to all who surrendered themselves to Prince John, and would join with him to maintain the Mount in the prince's name. That the Lady Adela was his betrothed, that she had been torn from him by force, and that he was determined to espouse her, at that very hour and in that very chapel, not doubting the pardon of Rome, which he intended to solicit, for taking a novice from her cell. Finally, he commanded all present, save his own people and the priest, to depart the chapel, adding that, not till the morrow, when the Mount would be fully armed and secured, by a reinforcement

which he expected that night from the friends of Prince John, could he consent to open the gates, or allow anyone to pass without the convent walls.

Sir Henry found himself obeyed without the least opposition; for so sudden had been the whole action that it seemed to have a paralysing effect on the minds of all.

Sir Henry, the agitated Adela, and the affrighted priest, supported by the armed band, forthwith approached the altar. The priest ascended the steps, knelt before the cross, arose, opened the book, and turned towards the youthful pair about to be united under such extraordinary circumstances.

At this crisis, a figure glided from behind one of the massive old columns that stood near the entrance at the west end of the chapel. His form was large, his height commanding; he was wrapped in a gown and mantle; his arms were folded on his breast; his cowl, for he wore one, was thrown back, so as to show his face, but not to leave bare his head. He stalked forward with the air of one who comes in the consciousness of power to enforce his will.

He stopped within a few paces of the altar, and with a look so stern, yet so commanding, that, combined with the fearless demeanour displayed at such a time and in such a place, there was in it something awful. He exclaimed:

"Forbear, forbear!" and stretching forth his hand, seized that of Adela, and tore it from Sir Henry's grasp.

Incensed at the action, the fiery young man laid his hand on his dagger, and drew some paces back, trembling with passion; yet, as if suddenly recollecting himself, forbore to draw it in such a place; but exclaimed:

"Who dares bid me forbear, when I stand here to wed my affianced bride?"

"I say to thee, forbear," exclaimed the palmer, in a voice that made the chapel ring again. Adela trembled, and felt its tones thrill to her secret soul.

"And who are you who thus interpose yourself between me and mine?" said Sir Henry. "This is the second time you

have intruded yourself upon me. But I will not be trifled with. You shall answer for this interruption ; you——”

“I will answer for it, and now,” said the palmer. “If you are a knight, if you are a man, as you value your honour, as you would save your good name from becoming a word of shame, the very scorn of men, I forbid you to wed this lady ; by the laws of chivalry I forbid it, till you have fulfilled your promise solemnly given to me, that on the Eve of St. John you would attend me ; would redeem your father’s token, lost with his honour and his life ; or that failing this, you would admit that the pledge was justly forfeited. To this are you sworn by the word of a true knight, for this is the Eve of St. John, and I am here to demand a fulfilment of your promise.”

“I will not shrink from it,” replied Sir Henry. “You have spoken but the truth ; I may not indeed wed till I have redeemed a pledge so solemnly given. Let my opponent appear. I am ready for the encounter.”

“Know him then in me,” said the palmer.

“In you !” exclaimed Sir Henry ; “you are under vows of penitence and discipline—impossible ; you wear but a palmer’s gown.”

“Look then on this,” said the palmer, drawing aside the gown in which he had been so carefully muffled, and showing beneath it the glittering rings of a coat of chain mail. “Think you,” he added, in somewhat a scornful manner, “that you alone can wear a pilgrim’s frock, to hide a coat of steel ? I am, even as yourself, Sir Henry, a sworn knight. On this, the Eve of St. John, my vow of discipline expires. To-morrow I am a free man. To-morrow I will meet you ; and will then give you such reasons for the interruption of this night’s ceremony as shall fully satisfy your utmost doubt—and if not, our swords must answer it. Remember your plighted word,—you will not quit this Mount till our conference is ended, till the token of a father’s lost honour be acknowledged or redeemed.”

At this moment there was a movement without the chapel ; in the next Sir Henry beheld Cædmon, who rushed in pale and breathless with alarm.

"Oh ! my dear lord," he exclaimed, as he cast a look of concern on Adela, "you must on the instant fly the Mount. We are discovered. Fly ! there is no safety but in flight !"

"Discovered !" said the Lady Adela. "Oh, save yourself ! Be not alarmed for me, I am prepared to meet the worst."

"Are we betrayed ?—how discovered ?—what mean you ?" said Sir Henry.

"I can scarcely satisfy you," replied Cædmon : "all I know is this, that the abbess has contrived to give some intimation of what has happened to the watch-tower that we passed in our ascent ; and a signal has been made to the galley with King Richard's men-at-arms : they are making for the shore ; in less than an hour will they be landed, and will be masters of the Mount."

"How know you this ?" said Sir Henry.

"One of our people passed forth to gain intelligence ; our fears being first awakened by observing the galley on the stir towards the shore. We must be overpowered by numbers ; flight, immediate flight can alone save us. Our horses await us at the base of the Mount ; we may yet cross, ere the tide be risen. But if there is delay, the sea too will be our enemy."

Even the palmer seemed shocked at this prospect of a danger so unavoidable to the daring knight. He conjured Sir Henry not rashly to throw away his life ; but to give orders that his followers should abandon the Mount, as it was impossible they could maintain it without the help of a reinforcement, that would now come too late. Adela implored him not to linger to meet certain death—a death that would consign them both to one grave.

Sir Henry turned to the weeping Adela, and declaring that he would never consent to part from her more, and that in moments of danger and of death she was as dear to him as in those of life and joy, he hurried her from the chapel, threw the

cloak he had brought with him for the purpose over her shoulders, and followed by his band of men-at-arms, and by the palmer, who declared he would not leave him till the object of their meeting should be fulfilled, hastened to reach the base of the rock ere it would be too late to cross the isthmus. Cædmon had gone forward, so that their horses were in readiness; they reached them without interruption, for their retreat had been as sudden as their victory.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

The strife of fiends is on the battling clouds,  
The glare of hell is in these sulphurous lightnings;  
This is no earthly storm.

Of winds and waves, the strangely mingling sounds,  
Ride heavily the night-wind's hollow sweep,  
Mocking the sounds of human lamentation.

MATURIN'S *Bertram*.

THE isthmus, which, when left by the tide, admitted, either on foot or on horseback, a communication between the Mount and the mainland, was, when the waters returned, covered by two currents that swept round the rock from opposite directions. Sometimes, at spring tides, or on sudden squalls, the causeway became impassable before the usual hour, and in stormy weather, or on any sudden or heavy swell of the sea, the Mount became very quickly surrounded by water, and remained as an island during many days.

To those who lived on it, or in the neighbourhood of the bay, these things were well known. But to strangers the passage was often hazardous, even at the regular periods.

Between the hours of six and seven on that Eve of St. John a very considerable change, that had been gradually coming on during the fore part of the day, took place in the weather. It blew a hard gale, and every sign in earth, sea, or sky, threatened a night of tempest; indeed, so much so, that many of the fishermen abandoned the preparations they were making for their wild

sports, with their fires, and went down to the shore to secure their nets and boats. Such as dwelt on the beach cleared their cottages of the little furniture they might chance to possess in their lower storeys; for, it being a spring-tide, in addition to the coming storm, the overflowing of the waters would probably inundate the ground floors of their humble dwellings.

The Lady Alicia, who was at the house of Samson, the Jew, had arisen from her couch, and was now pacing her chamber in great distress of mind; for Miriam, who really loved her, and to whom she had been a most generous friend, having less in her disposition of cold caution than her husband, had communicated to her that he had detected Sir Henry de Pomeroy as the leader of the band of pilgrims who had so lately passed over to the Mount.

Though the Lady Alicia was not aware that the deliverance of Adela was one motive for Sir Henry's visit to St. Michael's, yet the mere fact of his being there was quite enough to render her uneasy, and she purposed to lose no time in warning the lady abbess to be on her guard, lest Sir Henry should attempt, by any violent means, to remove her charge from her cell. But, unable to cross on account of the rising gale, she had been obliged to defer her intended visit till the next day.

In the interval she sought Samson and his wife in the apartment which opened on the terrace, and commanded a full view of the Mount and the bay.

The evening became every minute more and more dismal; the heavens seemed to hang heavily in middle air, as if about to descend in clouds and gloom upon the waters; and as this mass of vapours occasionally opened, they disclosed the sun's disk, of a dull red hue, on the breast of the ocean, giving a character of sombre sublimity to the extent of sea over which it flung its departing beams, as if to render but the more distinctly visible the angry and threatening billows that came rolling in with tumultuous succession towards the shore. The winds rose no less than the waves, and combined with the roaring of the waters, might seem, to the ear of fancy, like a requiem for the



devoted souls who, on this night, were destined to perish by a raging ocean and an irresistible tide. The sea-mews also gave notice of the tempest, by their clamours, as they winged their way to the crags among the rocks.

The storm visited the Mount with fury. Its fitful gale shook with rude blasts the pictured windows of the venerable chapel, whistled shrilly through the hollow clefts of the rock, and caused the nun to cross herself in her cell, and to say a prayer to St. Michael, the protecting angel of all high places, as the ancient towers of the convent trembled, and the old doors creaked and burst open, whilst the very foundations of the rock seemed to shake to their centre with the fury of the storm.

At length, for a short space, there fell an unnatural calm. The winds paused in their wild, yet solemn anthem; and so much did the gloom deepen during that portentous calm, that night seemed as if about to anticipate her hour, and to chase the twilight of a summer evening from the earth. But this "strange tranquillity" was but like the pause which sometimes occurs in the headlong career of human passions; a pause in which the physical powers appear to gather up their concentrated strength to give yet greater force to the moral tempest in its most appalling burst. Even so it was now. The darkness, which hung as a shroud about St. Michael's, was in a moment dispersed by a sheet of liquid fire, that, attracted no doubt by the height of the rock, appeared to pour down upon it from the surcharged clouds as they gathered above the crest of the lofty Mount.

Flash succeeded flash; the howling of the winds accompanied the roaring of the ocean and the screaming of the gulls, as the giant billows rolled onward, stronger, higher, fiercer, at every rush, whilst a raging tide lent both force and speed to their advance.

At this juncture, the Lady Alicia sat before the window which overlooked the terrace, and commanded a view of the Mount, and of the causeway that communicated with it at low tide.

Every now and then she cast her eye towards the scene without, but started from her reclining position, on hearing Samson observe to his wife, "that those must be foolhardy people who were attempting to make their way from the Mount across the isthmus at such a time of the tide, and through such a gathering storm."

The kind-hearted Miriam flew to the window, and exclaimed in an alarmed voice: "Alas! what is it I see? Horsemen and horses struggling to pass the isthmus in the midst of yonder waves, and the tide pouring in like a sluice; they will never reach the mainland alive."

"They may—they may yet be saved," said Samson, "if their horses are stout and good, and can swim when their footing fails, as fail it must, before they can reach the strand; but what madness to attempt the ford at such a time as this!"

"O God of Abraham!" said Miriam, clasping her hands together and looking upward, "do thou be with those unhappy people, even as thou wert with the children of Israel, when they fled across the Red Sea from the bondage of the Egyptians."

"The wind is in the east," said Samson, "and the storm comes up against it."

"O Father of Mercy!" continued Miriam, whose charity taught her to pray for Jew or Christian in such peril, "do thou be as a shield and a buckler of defence. Do thou stretch forth thy arm of mercy over yonder angry tide, and make the strong east wind to go back at thy bidding. O Father of Mercy! deface not thine own image, spare them!"

Samson shook his head, and looked sad, but said not a word of hope.

"But what is that I see that looks so white yonder, like the wing of the sea-mew fluttering in the gale?" said Miriam, "that white thing I see on yonder struggling steed, behind the second horseman? Alas! it is a woman. See! see! her white veil now rises with the wind and floats above the surge."

"A woman!" exclaimed the Lady Alicia, as she started

from her seat, her feelings acting as an instinct at this moment to call up her fears, for they told her that the woman, thus perilously placed behind the horseman on the struggling horse, was the Lady Adela.

To describe the agonised state of the wretched Lady Alicia at the sight, whilst she was labouring under this conviction, would be impossible. She dropped on her knees, she clasped her hands together, and remained for some moments absorbed in mental prayer; only the words, "God have mercy!" escaped in audible sounds from her lips. This done, she arose and summoned, or rather endeavoured to summon, that strong spirit of resolution to her aid which might enable her to await, with submission, the issue of the daring attempt of those who were endeavouring to make their way through the rising waters.

But whilst she did so, not the tempest without raged more fearfully than did that within her own soul, for her heart smote her with the renewed pangs of an undying remorse, and the words, "Thou hast found me, O mine enemy!" which she murmured as she cast her forlorn and despairing looks towards the sea, spoke but too plainly the fatal truth; that conscience now whispered to her each guilty recollection, as at the bidding of that dread monitor, they rose like fearful spectres before her view.

The spirit that had once upheld her ungoverned passions, she felt was about to desert her in this her hour of need; to give her up a prey to the last evil that can fall on the guilty head, the evil of despair. Samson, who saw her distress, said:

"There is hope for them yet, as long as the base of yonder cross is seen above the waters. Let its base be once covered, and I will not say but that, like Pharaoh and his host, the Lord will overwhelm them in the midst of the sea." \*

\* The stone cross here named, that stood on the isthmus leading to St. Michael's Mount, was erected in the time of Edward the Confessor. It stood for centuries surrounded by the sea at high tide. It was swept away in a great storm, about ninety years ago; the base of it still remains, and may be seen among the rocks and stones at low water.

"Oh ! be the holy cross their preservation," said the Lady Alicia. "Oh, blessed sign ! the waves have not yet reached it ! they may be preserved by its power."

"Not by wood or stone can man's life be preserved," said Miriam ; "but trust in Him who is seen even by the raging waters, before whom they become afraid and the depths are troubled. Pray to Him who rideth the whirlwinds to quell their fury, and may the Father of both Jew and Gentile hear thy prayer."

As Miriam spoke, the Lady Alicia stood, scarcely sensible of the import of her words. She looked white as the veil that encircled her head, her lips quivering, scarcely drawing breath ; silent, and almost motionless in the awe of an expectation so dreadful. Her eye, strained but not fixed, alternately glanced to the sign of safety, and to the advancing riders, as hope and fear struggled within her heart ; whilst the horsemen came on a few steps, or the waves arose and broke in sheets of foam, far above the base of the cross, or retreating in their long hollows, left bare the isthmus to its very bed. As her eye gazed on these terrible signs, not the penitent in the hour of his parting breath looks to the cross held out to him by the attendant priest with more eagerness, as his only remaining trust, than did the Lady Alicia now keep her entire soul fixed on that which arose before her aching sight, as the last, last hope of Adela's safety. She looked till her head became dizzy, and feeling she was unable longer to support herself, she tottered towards a seat that was somewhat apart from the window, sank down, and covered her eyes with her hands, as if to shut out from her view a sight of too much horror.

Miriam tried to comfort her, but not with words, for well did she know there are moments when all speech is unavailing ; when the mind is too much overborne to be able to comprehend even the full extent of that religious hope, which, in all extremities, is the only beacon light to be descried amidst the darkness and the terrors of the moral storm.

The sympathy of compassionate tears and those little acts

which speak a feeling heart, were not spared by Miriam towards the unhappy sufferer. But, alas ! she saw them not—she heeded them not—every faculty of body and soul being bound up in one expectation, one hope, one fear—“could the base of the cross still be seen ?”

“No, lady, no !” exclaimed Samson, “the sign of safety may be no longer seen. It has sunk amid the billows ; sheets of foam now cover the base.”

“Father of Mercy ! it is still seen,” said Miriam : “see, the billows retreat, and the base of the cross comes forth again ; there is hope still, hope that yonder sufferers will not die this death.”

“God be praised !” exclaimed the Lady Alicia : “O saints of heaven ! have mercy in this dreadful hour !”

“O lady ! hope not too soon,” said Miriam, her countenance changing, “lest thy sorrow come upon thee as upon the first-born of Egypt, in the night, and in great fear. See how yonder horsemen strive and struggle, as the waves dash up against them ; look ! one is covered ; I see nothing but a sheet of foam, like a snow-heap on a rock.”

“Now he rises from it,” said Samson ; “see how his horse breasts the waves ! he rears himself above them. Oh ! it is a terrible sight !—how the brave animal strives ! it is a noble instinct to save his rider ; and, oh ! look, surely those nearest the rock will perish.”

“Who will perish ? Not the horseman with Adela ?” exclaimed the Lady Alicia, in a voice of terror.

“No, no !” replied Miriam, “that horseman lives and struggles still—he approaches the cross ; the sea is not yet risen above the animal’s breast ; but the creature has become unmanageable, there is something amiss. What is it ? How it seems to strive ; see, another horseman endeavours to give his assistance, but he is driven back by yonder dark and giant billow, which comes roaring between, seeking its prey.”

“And look, Miriam,” whispered Samson, so as not to be heard by the Lady Alicia, “look, how that unhappy woman

stretches abroad her arms, as if asking help from the shore ; and now she raises them to heaven. Oh, brave horseman !— noble horse—that was a desperate plunge, yet it is in vain—the horse is entangled, his foot must be fast in some hollow of the rocks—horse and rider will be lost. But again, see how the creature struggles, plunges—that last effort has set him free ; but where is the woman ? I see not the white garment above the waves.”

“It floats upon them,” exclaimed Miriam ; “O God of Israel ! she is lost !”

“My child ! my child !” cried Lady Alicia, and rushing towards the window, as she uttered these words in a tone of agony that pierced the ear and chilled the blood, she lost all consciousness, and fell forward on the ground, deprived of sense and motion.

Miriam called for assistance. Her young handmaid hastened to give it. They raised the wretched woman from the ground, and did all that humanity or skill could suggest to restore her to life, and to administer to her such comfort as they could offer in an hour of such unmitigable suffering.

Samson had not tarried to give his assistance to the lady, for he had seen that the foremost horseman had become desperate, after the unfortunate female, who was under his charge, had been lost among the breakers, and that he was himself saved, apparently contrary to his own will, by the determination and exertions of another rider, who had come to his aid, and, at the risk of his own life, dragged the wretched man’s horse by the bridle in safety to the shore. A third rider followed close on their steps, and suddenly lent his assistance also to the preservation of the horseman, who made more than one effort to shake himself free from those that would persist in saving his life ; and, at length, accomplished their purpose.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

Oh! could'st thou but know  
With what a deep devotedness of woe  
I wept thy absence—o'er and o'er again  
Thinking of thee, still thee, till thought grew pain,  
And memory, like a drop that, night and day,  
Falls cold and ceaseless, wore my heart away.

MOORE.

WHEN the Lady Alicia de Beaumont was restored to her senses, she found herself on a couch in the room whence she had witnessed the fatal catastrophe. Miriam was weeping by her side. Sir Henry de Pomeroy stood near; his arms folded across his breast, his countenance pale, every feature expressive of a despair that preyed upon his heart, and rendered life a burthen, which seemed too insupportable long to be borne with "all its woe."

Cædmon, to whose exertions, at the imminent risk of his own life, De Pomeroy owed his preservation, stood by his side; every now and then he looked in Sir Henry's face with an eager and inquiring eye, but did not venture to break the calm of his despair, in these the first moments of his distress, by anything so vain as words of consolation.

The palmer, who had united his efforts to those of Cædmon to save De Pomeroy, was also present. He alone preserved his self-command. The solemnity of his manner, and the train of reflection which usually occupied his mind and characterised his countenance, could scarcely be rendered more impressive by any new event however calamitous.

He stood erect, grave, thoughtful; an observant witness of the distress of all around him; yet was there something in his looks and manner that seemed to indicate he was prepared rather to call on others to give their attention to him, than to afford his own to their sufferings at such a crisis.

The alarm, the confusion of so sudden and so violent a shock, the unavailing grief of such moments, at first prevented all attempts at explanation. It was not, therefore, till some words of passionate sorrow, dropped by Sir Henry, met the palmer's ear, that he came forward and addressed De Pomeroy in a tone of deep feeling.

"Unhappy man!" he said, "yet not so unhappy in that which now seems to you the greatest cause for sorrow. Peace be to the departed! her pure spirit has fled, like the dove upon its wing, far away from the stormy wind and the tempest of this rude world and all its woes. Grieve not for her, but bless the Father of Mercy that you were not permitted to accomplish so great a sin. The will of heaven, made known in the calamity of this hour, has in some measure changed my purpose; and now, therefore, do I speak. Weep not for her loss; but rejoice rather for your escape from a deadly crime, for know that in the gentle being you lament, you have lost, not a bride, but a sister; the offspring of the same parent; the late Lord de Pomeroy was the father to you both, and that unhappy woman was her guilty mother!"

The palmer pointed to the Lady Alicia as he spoke.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy stood mute; a sense of horror, mingled with surprise, deprived him of all power of utterance. At length, trembling with the violence of his feelings, he addressed the Lady Alicia in a hollow voice: "O most wretched woman! you who have so deceived us both to misery and ruin, you have destroyed your child!"

A groan of agony burst from the bosom of the Lady Alicia. She essayed to speak her feelings, her sorrows, her devoted love for Adela, her unavailing repentance; but so overwhelming was the nature of her distress, she could but utter a few scarcely



connected sentences. "Oh! could my life redeem hers, it should be given, thankfully given to restore my child!—my Adela, lost—lost. I could not summon resolution sufficient to degrade myself in her eyes—in yours. I could not speak the fatal truth, but Abbot Baldwin knew all. I confessed all to him; and it was by his advice that I devoted my unhappy child to a cell."

"The wily monk!" said Sir Henry de Pomeroy; "and he, too, has deceived me! But who are you?" he added, turning to the palmer, "you, who from the first seem to have possessed a full knowledge of these most miserable circumstances, by which the innocent have been made to suffer, whilst the guilty go free—you who hold my father's token and accuse his fame, say, who are you?"

The Lady Alicia looked up at hearing these words so vehemently addressed to the palmer by Sir Henry. She looked and shuddered as the recollection of the scene in the chapel of St. Magdalen crossed her mind; but she was too deeply affected to do more than repeat, with a feeling of indescribable terror, the words of Sir Henry, and "Say, who are you?" burst also from her lips.

"Do you not know me, Alicia de Beaumont?" said the palmer, as he threw back his hood. A chill stole through her veins, and placing her hands before her eyes, as if to shut out a sight that was insupportable, an ejaculation of horror and surprise escaped her lips.

"Now do you know me, Alicia de Beaumont?" said the palmer; "or have seventeen years passed in the burning plains and cities of the East, with the sorrows of a broken heart, so changed me, that, in the ruin before you, there remains no trace by which you can recognise a fond and injured husband?"

The Lady Alicia clasped her hands together, raised her streaming eyes, and threw herself wildly at the palmer's feet as she exclaimed, "Pardon—oh, pardon!—forbear all reproach. In this hour of unutterable misery, crush me not to the earth—

break not the bruised and wounded reed ! I can but die, and that will make all well."

The palmer raised her. "Be calm," he said, "be calm ; it is for no purpose of resentment that I am here. I know thy heart is penitent, or never, unhappy woman, never would I have returned into this land, that was once the scene of my greatest happiness, the scene also of my dishonour and my shame."

"Could your heart but know what mine has suffered, you would relent," said Lady Alicia ; "you would know the wrath of an offended God has filled to the brim my cup of misery ; that the wine is red, and that I have drunk it to the dregs. My most cruel creditor in injury would have wished in mercy the account were closed in death. Deep has been my sin—long and severe my punishment. God's justice found it out ; His arrows were abroad, and here," she added, as she emphatically laid her hand on her heart, "here have they struck."

"But my father," said Sir Henry de Pomeroy, "what of my father ? I have yet to learn his part in these most unhappy circumstances. Remember the token—I must know the truth."

"It is one that you, as his son, will blush to hear," said the palmer. "Your father was my most trusted friend ; we were to have gone as brothers-in-arms to the Holy Land together : when, such is the false heart of man, on my being directed by the prince I served to leave England on the sudden, ere your father could be prepared to go with me—how shall I speak what followed ! He sought my wife—my wife, who lived at Wilsworthy in the decency of an honest sorrow for her absent lord ; but thy father found her fair and frail. He stole into her easy faith, gained her frail affection, and having found her as a flower, in the unsullied beauty of her innocence, never ceased his wicked wiles till he had rifled its chaste sweets, and threw it as a worthless weed away. Adela, the lost Adela, was the fruit of their unhallowed love."

"But she was innocent—she never knew the wretched secret

of her birth," said Sir Henry; "she has passed out of life ignorant, even as she was innocent of all blame. I will not, then, lament her—but, oh that I had died with her! I should have been spared this hour."

The Lady Alicia sat in speechless agony, hearing, yet scarcely seeming to comprehend, so agitated were her looks and her demeanour.

The palmer continued: "Opportunity favoured this deceit; for, on her brother's death not long after, she purchased of the king the wardship of her infant niece. The child died, but my guilty wife concealed the fact and substituted her own living child, who had been nurtured by a Jewess, in its place.

"Circumstances had compelled her to entrust the tale of her guilt to a brother of the order of St. Francis, who, after the lapse of some months, received from one of his order, on his return from the Holy Land, some information which led him to conclude I was not really dead. He sought me over land and seas, and at length found me. From him I learnt the dreadful truth, that Adela, whom I supposed to be only the niece and ward of my wife, was her own daughter—the offspring of her guilty love. On hearing this, related with such evidence of facts that rendered doubt impossible, in the bitterness of my soul I vowed vengeance on the despoiler of my honour and my peace; and that, should my vengeance be accomplished, I would dedicate the remainder of my days to the service of the Red Cross in the East; and, till that service should no longer be required, I would never more revisit England—the scene of my happiness, of my misery. I also vowed that, whenever I did so revisit my native land, it should be as a palmer under penance, in deep humility, and I would never, even under circumstances of the strongest temptation, reveal my name, my rank, or my sorrows, till I had first accomplished a pilgrimage to the most holy places of the West, and had made my prayers and my offerings at the Mount of St. Michael on the Eve of St. John, that being

the day on which I bade the last farewell to my wife, whilst she was yet innocent of falsehood and of guilt."

"It was, then, by your hand," said Sir Henry, "that my father fell in the East, and to you he lost his honour's pledge."

"He did," said the palmer: "I accused him of his guilt; he endeavoured to defend it. He denied having used any arts such as I had charged him with using—the arts of the hag and the magician—as the means of my wife's seduction. He pledged his token, the silver spur, that he would maintain with his sword the honour of his name. We met; the sense of my injuries gave strength to my arm—he fell at the first blow. Here is his token. It is yours, Sir Henry, would you desire to redeem it by the way of arms; John de Beaumont will not deny you a fair field to regain it, if you think the ancient token of your house, a house once honourable in all its branches, should be so redeemed by you."

"Never," said De Pomeroy, "never! my sword would drop from my hand, could I think of raising it against a man so injured as thyself. My father's sins have long since been called to an account before the bar of heaven. His fair fame I would have defended with the last drop of my blood; but I will not draw a sword in support of his dishonour: I can but blush for the cause. Farewell, my Lord de Beaumont. After what has this day happened at the Mount, I must not tarry near it. I owe a duty to the dead." So saying, Sir Henry hastily rushed from the apartment. In a state of mind bordering on frenzy, from the complicated nature of his feelings, he gave directions to some of his people to cause search to be made for the body of Adela, mounted his horse and rode off, attended only by Cædmon, and two or three men-at-arms.

After his departure, the palmer turned to the Lady Alicia, who was supporting her head on the bosom of her faithful Miriam.

"Unhappy woman," he said, "ere I bid you for ever farewell, receive from the husband you have so deeply injured, his pardon of all injury; nay, more, his pity for what has this day chanced

to wring your soul with agony. O Alicia! though I am a broken-hearted man, for whom the world contains not a thing, in all its wearying round, to pleasure him, yet, even now, I cannot look upon you without emotions that shake and unman my foolish breast. The blow that struck at my peace came from an unsuspected hand. I am its victim; and here I stand, the ruin of myself."

The palmer paused a moment; looked sorrowfully upon the afflicted lady, and continued, in a voice and manner that were no less affectionate than solemn:

"Farewell! my purpose is accomplished; receive my last forgiveness. Retire into some religious house. Give thy wealth to the Church and to the poor—thyself to God. Seek by tears of penitence to wash out thine offences; and may peace and blessing be thine. My vows compel me to visit again the Holy Land, thither do I go, and thence I shall never more return. Farewell, then, for ever farewell!"

He clasped the wretched penitent to his bosom, as she bade him a last and distracted adieu; and no sooner was he gone than she sank into such a state of suffering and distress, that those who were about her believed that night would be her last. She lived, though under such an access of fever that it was impossible she could be removed from the house of the Jew during several weeks, and at length sunk, shattered in mind and body by the terrible scenes through which she had passed, and died, attended to the last by the faithful Miriam, sincerely penitent.

On the morning after the departure of Sir Henry, the body of the unfortunate Adela was washed on shore; and being speedily discovered by the followers of De Pomeroy, it was removed to the convent of the Cistercian nuns, near Tregony, in Cornwall, of which town Sir Henry held the lordship. As he had directed, information of what had happened was conveyed to him. In a short time he arrived at the convent.

The capture and brief possession of St. Michael's Mount for the Earl of Mortaigne, had drawn upon Sir Henry the

attention of all the friends and officials in the interests of King Richard throughout Cornwall. Justly, therefore, fearing some sudden assault, and even an arrest, for his bold and rebellious deed, Sir Henry armed both himself and his followers ; so that the obsequies of the Lady Adela, performed within the chapel of a peaceful sisterhood of nuns, were more like those of a feudal baron in a time of civil strife, than the last rites paid to virgin innocence and beauty untimely consigned to the tomb.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy, after the ceremonies were ended, slowly and silently withdrew from the chapel, mounted a horse that stood ready for him without, went forward, attended only by Cædmon and a few of his most trusted followers, took some obscure road, and, except by those who were admitted to his confidence, he was heard of no more for several weeks. At length, without any previous notice being given to the châtelain, or to his people, he suddenly appeared before the gates of his castle of Berry Pomeroy in Devon, and there took up his abode.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

Whereat he smitten was with great affright,  
And trembling terror did his heart apall,  
Ne wist he what to thinke of that same sight,  
Ne what to say, ne what to do at all :  
He doubted least it were some magicall  
Illusion that did beguile his sense,  
Or wandering ghost that wanted funerall,  
Or aery spirite, under false pretence,  
Or hellish feend raysed up through devilish science.

SPENSER.

TWELVE months had passed away, and had brought with them their usual vicissitudes, their measure of weal and woe, to the several personages of our history, and much of change also to this realm of England.

Richard, in the interval, had returned from his captivity, once more to resume the sceptre of regal power, which his wily and treacherous brother, John Earl of Mortaigne, had so industriously laboured to wrest from him during his imprisonment and misfortunes.

The return of the heroic Richard was at a moment the most favourable for his own safety, and that of the kingdom at large. It reanimated the party who had been true and faithful to him ; it confirmed and fixed in their allegiance the doubtful and the wavering ; it struck a panic into the hearts of the seditious ; put to flight many of his most treacherous foes, cooled the enterprises of others, and finally, so completely broke the party of the rebel prince, that John, seeing his cause

was hopeless, hastened to throw himself at his brother's feet, to beg his forgiveness for the past, and to offer his allegiance for the future. As a proof of his sincerity, he hesitated not to betray, and to give up to the king's wrath, some of those adherents who had put themselves within his power by having espoused his rebellious cause.

At this juncture, several of the principal barons who had contributed their support to the late insurrections, no sooner heard of Richard's return to his kingdom than, desirous to secure their own safety, they hastened to shelter themselves among their followers and vassals, within the strong walls of their feudal castles. There they designed to await the result of those measures the king might be disposed to take with them, before they decided on a renewed fealty, or an open resistance for the preservation of their lives.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy was one of those who, on the earliest intimation of Richard's return, and John's treachery to his partisans, had so retreated to his castle at Berry Pomeroy. Had not the cause we have named compelled him to fly to this retreat, he would, in all probability, have sought it; for the melancholy and solitude which seemed to be natural to its walls, harmonised with the feelings he indulged for his own overwhelming afflictions.

The castle was situated on the top of a lofty rock; it rose abruptly from the east, and, in part, overhung a small stream called the Hemms. On this side, the castle walls towered above a terrace that lay along the level space, and close to the verge of the declivity.

This terrace commanded a fine view of the heights, woods, and hills on the opposite side of the valley, and looked down on the small stream we have just named, that ran brawling over masses of rock and stone at the base of this inaccessible precipice. The south front of the castle, saving it had not the advantage of being seen on the summit of a rocky height, was no less striking. The towers and walls were strongly battlemented: towards the western end stood the gateway, guarded



by its warlike towers on either side. The entrance was doubly portcullised, and over its vaulted archway was the guard-room or first ward. The castle, even at this early period, stood embosomed in woods; altogether, its profound silence, its solitude and gloom, seemed to the eye of a stranger more suited to the contemplative spirit of the monks, than to the fierce, stirring, and warlike character of those who were now the usual inhabitants of its walls.

Cædmon never having joined the rebellion had nothing to fear from the king, but having by his flight incurred the vengeance of his liege lord the Abbot Baldwin, now clung to the protection of Sir Henry, and endeavoured by the resources of an accomplished mind, to dispel the melancholy which habitually hung around the life of his friend.

De Pomeroy made no complaint of any kind; he scarcely alluded to the past, appeared to have no interest in the future, and hardly seemed to be conscious of the present. He was more as a man who broods over the recollection of past passions, than as one who cherishes any that could disturb his peace anew. So frequent were his fits of abstraction, of silence, and of a solitude which liked to shroud itself in mystery, that it was merely by a word, now and then spoken, that he at all alluded to his misfortunes. Yet was it evident to Cædmon, that the recollection of the horrible fate of the Lady Adela was ever present to a mind which, having so long brooded over its own misery, was losing the power to shake it off.

On one occasion, however, the unhappy man mentioned his sister's name; it was when he gave some directions for the completion of a monumental effigy that he designed to place on her tomb, over the spot wherein she was interred, at Tregony in Cornwall.

Cædmon was unremitting in his endeavours to induce Sir Henry to overcome this gloom and take even the necessary steps to secure the safety of his castle and dependents, but to all his pleadings Sir Henry would only reply by a sad and weary smile.

"Go where you will," urged Cædmon, "so that you leave this

place ; for here you must not stay. Though you are in one of the strongest castles of the West, yet are you careless of its defence. The watch-towers are often unmanned ; on the battlements no guard is kept in the night ; the gates are frequently left unlocked, till after sundown ; and, from your own neglect of your safety, your followers have adopted the idea that you are perfectly secure, and that you have received an assurance of it. The result of the king's judgment is still doubtful. Till, therefore, something is decided, either adopt a necessary precaution to enable you to keep on the defensive within your own castle, or pass over into Normandy, where you have possessions, and tarry there, till these storms shall be overblown, when, you and the princely Richard being reconciled, you may return hither, in the most perfect safety."

To this wise counsel De Pomeroy turned a deaf ear. In vain was it that Cædmon set before him the treachery of Prince John to all who had been his partisans in the late unhappy rebellion. As a confirmation of his arguments, he could instance Abbot Baldwin. That wily monk had for some time found great success attend his plans ; indeed, he had seemed to be on the eve of accomplishing all his purposes. He had so far gained the encouragement of the Pope, in his appeal to Rome, that he was in full expectation of receiving a bull from His Holiness, that should end all his quarrels with the Bishop of Exeter, by constituting the abbey of Tavistock altogether exempt from episcopal jurisdiction, and subject only to the see of Rome.

But the Pope, who had, in secret, aided the machinations of the Earl of Mortaigne, whilst Richard was in prison, no sooner found that the lion-hearted monarch was once more returned in safety to wield the sceptre of England, than, without delay, he gave up the sinking cause of Prince John, and, in the most zealous manner, renewed his friendship with the gallant king. And, in order to make his court to him more effectual, he sacrificed, as one of his first moves towards a change of party, Abbot Baldwin.

It is almost needless to add, that His Holiness, in consequence of this, withdrew his countenance from the appeal made to Rome, and left Tavistock Abbey still under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of Exeter; and its ambitious and subtle abbot to break his heart in the bitterness of a proud, wounded, and disappointed spirit, burning with vain and fruitless desires for revenge.

These things had such an effect, both on his mind and constitution, that Baldwin died of a fever, brought on by the combined influence of passions so strong and circumstances so mortifying to a proud spirit. The abbot, in his mortal part, was laid to rest in the cloisters of his own monastery, near the tomb of Livingus, in the odour of sanctity, and most sincerely regretted by all the monks, over whom he had borne his rule with but too indulgent sway.

To return to Sir Henry de Pomeroy. As the gloom of his mind deepened, he would dwell much upon the traditional portents which were held to forecast peril, sorrow, or death to members of his ancient house: and would gaze long upon the portrait of a stern warrior of his race, bearing in his hand a hawk and the silver spurs, whose spirit was said to wander through the castle halls to give intimation of the approaching fate of one of his descendants. He was engaged one day with Cædmon in this melancholy fashion, when a long and loud blast of a bugle echoed through court, tower, and hall.

There was a slight change in Sir Henry's countenance as he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"It is the huntsman, who thus calls up the castle with his horn," said De Pomeroy. "I hear the tramp of horses; they are making ready for the chase."

"These sounds are not the sounds of horses equipped for the chase," said Cædmon; "for, hark! I hear the clash of arms. The bugle sounds again; it is without the castle gates. Who can it be, who thus comes in the array of arms? Sir Henry, shall I go forward to the ward, and order the men to lower the

portcullis, that we may talk with these new-comers, ere they cross your gates?"

"Not so," replied Sir Henry; "have I not already said that I will not fear? I will summon Eustace to bring us tidings."

He did so, and Eustace soon after returned.

"A herald from King Richard," said Eustace; "he comes to greet Sir Henry de Pomeroy at his castle of Berry Pomeroy; he comes with a guard of archers, and wears a tabard; shall I give him entrance?"

"Marshal him hither with all honour," said Sir Henry. "But he is here already; he has followed hard upon your steps."

The herald entered: he wore a tabard embroidered with lions in gold; his staff of office was in his hand. He was followed by a guard that wore the royal badges.

On seeing the herald, De Pomeroy started, and even recoiled some paces at his approach.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "Sir Geoffrey de Malduit! what may his presence augur in my castle?"

"Even what thou wilt," replied Geoffrey, with his accustomed unperturbed effrontery. "Sir Henry de Pomeroy, I come into thy presence on the service of King Richard. In me you see not Geoffrey de Malduit, but the herald of our liege lord: respect, therefore, my commission, if you respect not the person of him who bears it. I am bound on a duty which, in the king's name, compels me to visit every castle of the West, wherein those barons have enclosed themselves within their walls, who have stood aloof from King Richard since his return home. I come to look on the order and number of your men, the state of your castle; truly there seems no disposition to resist his highness's pleasure, for your gates opened to me, the royal herald, on the first summons. This is well: I ask of you, therefore, Sir Henry, but hospitality for myself and my people: we are travellers on our way, and shall not long trouble you."

"Sir Geoffrey de Malduit," said Sir Henry sternly, as he folded

his arms across his breast, and looked on him with a proud scorn, "Sir Geoffrey de Malduit, there can be no fellowship between thee and me. As you come wearing the tabard of England's king, and in the name of Richard, against whose right and power I take all here present to witness, I make no resistance, you shall have all respect and honour paid to you in this castle. In the king's name you may command here; and by the authority of that name, I and mine will obey. You have required my hospitality for you and yours as wayfarers. Take it and welcome; the hospitality of a De Pomeroy was never yet required in vain. Thus much have I spoken as due to the king's highness, and to the honour of the lord of this castle. Now, hear me in my own individual person; as Henry de Pomeroy, addressing himself to a sworn knight, hear me."

Malduit bowed; and Sir Henry continued,—“Thy time here accomplished, on the king's mission, thy band and thyself quit from my halls; thy herald's coat off thy back; and thou once more denuded of thy ill-merited royal honours, and no more left of thee than stands acknowledged in the ungarnished person of Geoffrey de Malduit—why then will I defy thee, as I do now, to a mortal combat at arms, as base, cowardly, and false-hearted; and in proof of my defiance, I here throw down my glove in gage of battle. Wilt thou underlay my challenge? yea or nay?”

Geoffrey de Malduit turned white with passion; he compressed his lips, drew his breath inwardly, kept silence, paused a minute, and then with the most perfect calm, as if no strong passion had for a moment shaken his bosom, said in a careless manner, as he took up the glove—“Geoffrey de Malduit stoops to take up the gage of thy scorn, Sir Henry; in what way it may be best answered, we will settle ere we part. In the interval, we will suspend all feuds, and do what we can to do credit to the hospitality of Berry Pomeroy, offered with so much courtesy,—with so much honour to the temper of its valiant and gracious lord.”

This was spoken in such a manner that neither Sir Henry nor Cædmon could immediately decide if it were intended in earnest or in mockery ; the exercise of a sarcastic humour being the nearest approach to the cheerful that was ever witnessed in Geoffrey de Malduit in a social or domestic circle. That an habitual sneerer should sneer, even when he wanted to appear courteous, was therefore no matter of surprise ; and as he took up the glove, and placed it in his girdle in proof that he accepted the challenge, no one present doubted his sincerity in this particular.

Sir Henry, then, continued to entertain Sir Geoffrey de Malduit as the herald of his highness the king. On the first day, he caused the hart-hounds to be led forth for his amusement, and a fat buck was stricken and feasted upon in the castle halls. On the second, there was hawking ; and on the third and last, a tilting in the castle court. On each day the banquet was served, and the wine-cup sparkled with the richest wines of France.

Thus passed the time. On the morrow (the day appointed for his departure), Sir Geoffrey de Malduit declared it was his intention to go forward to Dartmouth Castle ; yet, when the morrow came, he changed his purpose, he said he would rest one night more at Berry Pomeroy. It was the Eve of St. John.

Cædmon, who watched De Pomeroy with the eye of deep anxiety, observed the sadness which had stolen over the countenance of his friend. He saw that the recollection of what had passed on the last Eve of St. John, had completely overcome his spirit ; and he rather favoured some slight excuse which De Pomeroy made to steal away from his guests at an early hour after supper.

De Pomeroy passed into the chamber we have before noticed, where hung the pictures. No lamp was there burning ; but the moon fell in mild and cold radiance through the long, narrow, and shafted windows of the apartment.

Only a few fleecy clouds, edged and touched with her silvery

light, floated above the woods, now partially illumined by her beams, whilst the surrounding shadows were softened and mellowed into harmony. The little river brawled along the woods at the foot of the precipice on the eastern side of the castle: it was now gleaming with the radiance that trembled on the long line of its musical and flowing waters. The towers of Berry Pomeroy stood erect on the summit of the hill, in the solemnity of night. No sentinel was on the ramparts of this part of the building; the moon alone silvered their turreted tops; they looked cold and white as marble in its beams.

We have said that the terrace overlooked the north-east. It was there that De Pomeroy now stood, contemplating the placid and beautiful scene that lay before him. It was of a kind fitted for the indulgence of that calm and solemn spirit of melancholy, which the sight of the majestic in nature, touched and characterised with a degree of mystery, never fails to present to the imagination. And, as whatever is mysterious more or less connects itself with images of high and holy things, the still hour of the night, the silvery lights and softened shadows of moonlight, are peculiarly adapted to raise in the mind a sense of awe.

Sir Henry de Pomeroy had retraced his steps to the farthest end of the terrace, and was passing under the shadow of a tower that led to another part of the castle, when he fancied he saw something move in the dusky obscurity that lay before him. He paused,—looked again,—saw it move forward in the direction he was about to take.

He spoke—demanded who was there? No answer was returned. Suddenly there was a rushing sound, as if something swept close by him. He looked again; he saw nothing. He once more fixed his eyes on the path he had just passed over, and determined to retrace his steps. He now beheld a tall and shadowy figure, that seemed to stand motionless in the direct line of path he was about to pursue, still somewhat obscured by the shade of the castle wall, that extended along

the whole length of the terrace which lay at its foot, the terrace itself being alone bounded by the precipice above the rocks, river, and woods, that lay at its base.

A thrill of feeling, not unallied to superstitious dread, determined Sir Henry to follow the figure that refused to answer to his repeated calls. He advanced; the figure did the same and glided on before him, but not with a motion natural to one who walks the earth. Though he followed close, De Pomeroy could not overtake his extraordinary visitant. At length he pursued him to the very centre of the terrace, where but a moment before there had been the brightest light; but now there was obscurity, for a cloud had crossed the moon's disk and veiled her splendid light. It passed away, leaving her "unclouded in majesty" as before.

The light fell in its clearest, fullest radiance on the terrace. De Pomeroy rushed forward; here he must come upon the intruder, for there were but a few paces between himself and the figure on the one side, and the precipice on the other. The figure in an instant turned to confront him; De Pomeroy saw him face to face, and by the light of the moon, which was but a little paler than that of day, but as "the daylight sick," he saw him, and felt a cold shudder creep through every vein, as he recognised in the red mantle, the hawk on the wrist, and the silver spurs, depending from the chain, held in the right hand, the death-like and fixed countenance, the figure of that De Pomeroy represented in the picture, to whose visitations in this world so fearful a portent was annexed.

An exclamation, in a tone high and shrill, escaped the lips of the terrified De Pomeroy, as he made a rush to lay his hand upon the figure. It eluded his grasp; he saw it dart forward, but he saw it no more. He had courage enough, even in such a moment as this, to advance to the very edge, and to look down the precipice. There he saw nothing but the black and yawning gulf that lay before him. Confused, astonished, doubting the evidence of his own senses, shaken and assaulted by fears he had never before known, he rushed



back to the castle, scarcely seeming to feel the ground over which he passed.

The first person he encountered in the ante-room was Cædmon; the flush of anger was on his cheek, his brow was knit, he seemed shaking with passion.

"What has chanced, Cædmon?" inquired De Pomeroy, on meeting.

"I have quarrelled with Geoffrey de Malduit," replied Cædmon; "he has insulted me over his cups; and, more than that—But, merciful heaven! what has chanced to you, Sir Henry? you tremble, and your countenance is pale. You look like the old picture of Sir Ralph de Pomeroy. What has happened?"

"What you will not believe, Cædmon," replied De Pomeroy. "I have seen him!—nay, start not,—the spectre of Ralph de Pomeroy *has* crossed my path,—it is no fancy. As there is truth in heaven or on earth,—by the word of a knight, I speak sooth. *Like* him, dost thou say? maybe I shall be more like him still, even as he is now, ere many moons are waned; for the spectre, if our nurses speak truth, never yet came on a false errand to the Castle of De Pomeroy."

"If it bodes evil, it has spoken truth already, and evil enough for this night," said Cædmon; "for that Geoffrey de Malduit meditates some injury to thee, I am certain; it is on this ground that we have quarrelled."

"How! what does he meditate? and wherefore didst thou, Cædmon, take up my quarrel with such a craven; one whom I have reserved to chastise with my own sword, in due time and place, but not under my own roof?"

"I could not do other," said Cædmon. "No sooner had you left the hall, than he inquired where you were gone; and said that he had bethought him he ought not so to linger on his way. He must therefore leave the castle suddenly. To depart by night would draw less observation on him and his band. He then talked apart with them; and I distinctly heard him give orders that your horse should be saddled, and made ready

as soon as the horses of his own people; and then turning to me, with an air of insolence, he bade me go and seek you out, as if I had been his page, or his serving varlet. At insolence such as this I could not keep my temper. Yet I so far governed myself, that I forbore to push our quarrel to extremity, lest I should lose the opportunity to leave the hall to warn you of these matters, and bid you beware; as Geoffrey de Malduit is in a mood both insolent and dangerous,—there is malice in his heart. I saw the spirit of a fiend lurk in his villainous eye. If you can avoid him, do so.”

“I will not,” said De Pomeroy; “I will avoid no man under my own roof. I have done him no wrong; and I would face him if he were tenfold more a Malduit than he is.”

“Be not rash,” said Cædmon; “if you can avoid him, let me pray you to do so. I do entreat you to forbear him; for he is this night both malicious and dangerous, or never was there malice or danger in the heart of a wicked man.”

De Pomeroy made no reply, but followed by Cædmon, passed forward. It was with a mind greatly excited, wrought to the highest pitch of displeasure, and prepared to feel with more than ordinary passion the insolence of De Malduit, that Sir Henry now encountered him in the great hall, where they had previously supped.

As they met, their looks spoke defiance; those of Malduit wore an expression that was almost demoniacal. He had deliberately contemplated and worked himself up to the execution of a deed of the most cold-blooded treachery of which the still-existing records of his age bear testimony. For after having been entertained in the most hospitable manner by his destined victim, Malduit reserved for the last night of his sojourn at the castle the execution of the purpose which had brought him to its gates.

Immediately on seeing De Pomeroy, he drew from his vest a parchment, unrolled it, and showed it was a warrant from Richard in council, to arrest Sir Henry de Pomeroy, as a traitor, for having been in league with the partisans of the

Earl of Mortaigne in the late insurrections in various parts of the kingdom, and more especially in the West.

Malduit now offered to lay hands on De Pomeroy, who became almost frantic with passion at this repeated insult.

"Off, off!" he exclaimed; "lay no hands on me; I will not endure thy pernicious touch; for thou, Geoffrey de Malduit, evil in thy race and in thy nature,—thou art too vile to approach one who bears the character or feelings of a man. Thou art callous to all reproach; for thou hast no conscience that could be roused to blush for thine own villainy. For three days hast thou been under my roof, honourably entertained as a herald of the king, and yet as such, ere thou wouldst now quit my castle walls, for the first time dost thou let me know the purpose that brought thee to them; and that too when I did not for an instant bar my gates against the king's power in thy person. But thou hast neither honour nor humanity in thy soul, else this last act of thy baseness thou wouldst have delayed till to-morrow, and not have executed it on the Eve of St. John."

The wretch laughed in the brutality of his triumph, as he said: "Yes, the last Eve of St. John was marked by a godly pilgrimage of thine; to seize the Mount like a traitor to thy sovereign prince, and to steal the Lady Adela from her cell, where she was placed to hide her dishonour and thine from all the world."

At the hearing of this most false, most unjust, and cruel taunt thrown on the memory of the blameless Adela, Sir Henry de Pomeroy, without a pause to draw breath enough to give utterance to his indignation, fell a few paces back, drew his dagger, rushed on De Malduit, and buried the weapon up to the very haft in the treacherous heart. The sturdy wretch rolled at his feet, uttered a faint groan, and expired.

To paint the scene that followed would be impossible. The followers of De Malduit gathered round the body, raised it, and vainly essayed to find some sign of lingering life. All were so much engaged that at the instant, and for some moments,

not one of them observed that Sir Henry de Pomeroy had fled from the hall, and that Cædmon had followed him.

Cædmon had, indeed, followed with the most anxious purpose, to prevent, if possible, further mischief, amidst such turbulent and unruly men and passions. In vain, however, did he now interfere; in vain did he endeavour to learn from Sir Henry his purpose. He hoped that De Pomeroy had fled from the hall to call up his vassals to stand by him at this extremity.

But it was all in vain; there was an air of wildness, amounting to frenzy, in the demeanour, the looks, the words of De Pomeroy. He gazed on Cædmon as he spoke, as if he neither heard nor comprehended what he said. He walked in rapid strides to the courtyard of the castle. There he saw his own horse, standing equipped, ready for his master, as Geoffrey de Malduit had directed.

On seeing the horse, Sir Henry's consciousness appeared to return—his disturbed demeanour became more calm; still there was an air of wildness in his looks and manner.

"What do you mean, Sir Henry?" said Cædmon, affrighted by the wild eagerness of his looks. "Where will you go?"

"Where ~~do~~ go?" cried Sir Henry; and a laugh, that curdled the blood, shocked Cædmon as it met his ear, for in it he recognised the laugh of absolute frenzy. "Where man shall have no power to wreak his will on De Pomeroy. Thinkest thou, Cædmon, that when yonder carrion is cast forth to the dogs, I shall be pardoned having made the base wretch fit to banquet them and the worms? No; I am already called traitor—murderer will be now my title, and I shall die as a murderer dies, by the hand of the public executioner. But this shall never be: spirit of my forefathers, I thank thee—thou hast marshalled me the way. Farewell, Cædmon, thou only true friend, farewell! On! my brave steed, on!—knowest thou not this is the Eve of St. John, the eve on which she perished?—Adela—thy death is requited now!"

So saying, he looked up to heaven, as if gazing on something

in the upper air; then gave the rein to his horse, and struck with his heels its sides; the noble animal, used to obey the least motion of his rider, dashed forward, but not in the direction of the gates of the castle. Cædmon saw him turn the creature's head towards the terrace. The young Saxon followed with the foot of a fawn. But it was too late: De Pomeroy had gained the terrace. The instinct of the horse resisted all his rider's efforts to make him leap the precipice; till, tearing off the short cloak he wore, Sir Henry threw it over the animal's eyes, and in another second both horse and rider had passed the fearful gulf, and lay dead at its base.

Years, centuries, have rolled away since this occurrence took place at Berry Pomeroy Castle; but not even at this distance of time could the writer of these pages visit the spot, without feeling a shudder as she stood on the fatal terrace, and looked down the precipice which tradition still points out as the scene of the fearful death of the gallant though erring Sir Henry de Pomeroy.

## NOTES.

CAREW, in his "Survey of Cornwall," says: "Henry de la Pomeroy lived at, and was lord of Berry Pomeroy, in this county. This Henry, taking heart at the imprisonment of Richard the First by Leopoldus, Duke of Austria, surprised and expelled the monks out of Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, that there he might be a petty prince by himself. But, being ascertained of his sovereign's enlargement, and fearing deserved death, to prevent it, he laid violent hands on himself, as Roger Hoveden doth report. But the descendants from this Pomeroy made a different relation of this accident; affirming, that, a sergeant-at-arms of the king's came to his castle at Berry Pomeroy, and there received kind entertainment for certain days together, and at his departure was gratified with a liberal reward: in counter-change whereof he then, and no sooner, revealed his long-concealed errand, produced a warrant, and flatly arrested his host, to make his immediate appearance before the king, to answer to a capital crime; which unexpected and ill-carried message De Pomeroy took in such despite, that with his dagger he stabbed the messenger to the heart. Then, despairing of pardon in so superlative an offence, he abandoned his home, and got himself to his sister, abiding in the island of Mount St. Michael's, in Cornwall. Here he bequeathed a large portion of his land to religious people dwelling there, to pray for the redeeming of his soul; and lastly (that the remainder of his

estate might descend to his heir), he caused himself to be let blood unto death."

Prince's account differs somewhat from the above in a few particulars. I give the following from his "Worthies of Devon:" "Sir Henry de la Pomerai, being a man of war, as his character is, adhered unto John, Earl of Moretain and Cornwall, against King Richard, being then in the Holy Land, and in behalf of the said John, expelled the monks out of Michael's Mount, in Cornwall, and fortified the same. There is a different account given of this matter, the whole of which, as laid down on both sides, I shall faithfully relate as I find it. Some say this gentleman had taken some great disgust at King Richard the First; probably because that king had seized his lands for coming into England without his leave, and exacted of him a fine of seven hundred marks for the livery of them again. Hereupon, when the said king (coming from his noble exploits in the Holy Land) was imprisoned in Germany by Leopoldus Duke of Austria, taking heart thereat, he surprised St. Michael's Mount aforesaid, and expelled the monks from thence, after which he fortified it for his defence and safety; or (as one tells us), that there he might be a petty prince by himself. Howbeit, soon after, being ascertained of his sovereign's enlargement, the very fear of ensuing harm wrought in him a present effect of the utmost that any harm could bring, and that was death. So Hollingshed writeth, that after he had took St. Michael's Mount in Cornwall, hearing of King Richard's return, he died with thought, or as another expresseth it, with grief; whereupon the old cell and new forts were surrendered to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in the king's behalf." The second story, respecting the arrest of the sergeant-at-arms, and De Pomeroy stabbing him, etc., Prince gives from Carew. But the *traditional* tale, in its close, is far more romantic and appalling than even that which avers that De Pomeroy caused himself to be bled to death.

TRADITION says that, after having stabbed to the heart the treacherous and ungrateful villain who had been so hospitably

entertained at his castle for four days, when in the act to arrest him, De Pomeroy, despairing of pardon from the king, mounted his horse, and riding furiously to the back of his castle, compelled the animal to leap from the lofty terrace into the gulph below, where horse and horseman were both killed on the spot.

Another legend avers, that when the castles of the great barons were ordered to be dismantled, two members of the De Pomeroy race refused compliance, and rather than yield preferred a voluntary death by spurring their horses from off the terrace of their ancient castle. Both found a grave beneath its lofty and castle-crowned rock.

Gilbert, in his "History of Cornwall," states, that when De Pomeroy and his followers surprised St. Michael's Mount, they disguised themselves by wearing the gowns and cloaks of pilgrims over their armour—so they crossed the isthmus, and so they gained their footing on the Mount, when suddenly throwing off their disguise, they drew their swords, and obtained possession of the place.

*Black Shields* and *Smitten Hart Lane* are both places so called on the Manor of Cudlipp town, the property of the Rev. E. A. Bray, on the borders of Dartmoor; their very remarkable names alone suggested the incidents which are made to occur in those localities.

In the Rev. Mr. Oliver's account of the abbots of Tavistock, Baldwin is named as having been the superior of the extensive monastery of the Benedictines in that town, at the date of my story. I therefore introduced him, though nothing but his name appears in the Rev. Mr. Oliver's account. The dispute which I have made to occur between Abbot Baldwin and the Bishop of Exeter, when the former appeals to Rome, and pleads that his house is "the exempt Monastery of Tavistock," gives, I believe, no unfaithful picture of those disagreements, which frequently arose to quarrels of the most serious nature, between the abbots and the bishops in these kingdoms. The following extract from Mr. Oliver's curious work, will be sufficient to



prove that I am not without warranty for the dispute between the superior of our abbey and the episcopal see in my tale :

“This abbot (Richard Banham,) was cited 15th April, 1513, to appear before Dr. Richard Collet, the bishop’s commissioner, to answer to the charge of contempt of episcopal authority. The abbot, instead of explaining the occasion of his conduct or offering any apology, produced a written appeal to the Roman court. The appeal was declared by the commissioners to be frivolous and inadmissible. For his obstinacy the abbot was suspended that very day ; and on the 22nd of the same month was excommunicated ‘*propter multiplicem contumaciam.*’ On the 10th of May, he appeared in person before Bishop Oldham, at the palace of Exeter, and on his bended knees, most humbly and most earnestly entreated to be absolved from his censures ; and offered to submit himself unconditionally to the bishop’s correction. The bishop then tendered the oath of submission to the see of Exeter, and after he had taken it, absolved him from his censures, whereupon the abbot paid him down five pounds of gold. The repentance of the abbot seems to have been insincere ; for soon after he appealed to the primate, William Warham, and to Richard Fitz-James, bishop of London. The question chiefly turned on the right of episcopal visitation. The prelates decided on the 8th of February following, that the abbot had not produced any indults, bulls, or vouchers authorising any exemption from the jurisdiction of the ordinary ; they therefore decreed that he and his convent should submit to this regularly constituted authority, as their predecessors had done from time immemorial : they recommended the abbot to apply to the bishop (Oldham) for the benefit of absolution ; and they directed the bishop to confer it without hesitation, and to treat the abbot with mildness and paternal affection.” So far Oldham’s register.

This abbot was not discouraged by defeat. From the primate he appealed to the court of Rome ; and at last succeeded in obtaining from Leo X., a bull of such ample and extraordinary privileges, as completely to indemnify him for his former expenses

and defeat. This bull is dated 14th September, 1517. It expressly exempts the abbey of Tavistock, with its several dependencies, from all archiepiscopal and all episcopal jurisdiction, visitation and superiority, and takes it and them under the sole and immediate protection of the holy see. It declares that all suspensions, interdicts, and excommunications pronounced against them by any other authority than that of the see apostolic, are absolutely null and void.

As an acknowledgment for such sweeping liberality, the abbot was annually to pay to the apostolic chamber, on the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul, half an ounce of gold, *i.e.* twenty shillings of lawful money of Great Britain.

The ordeal of bread and cheese, as being peculiar to the monks, is mentioned by Henry, in his "History of England." Many of the customs, and the duties of the officials, their privileges, etc., of the monks of the monastery of Tavistock, as introduced in the romance, are founded on the authority of that most learned and judicious antiquary, the Rev. Mr. Fosbroke.

In the year 1836, in company with Mr. Bray, I visited the most interesting points of the county of Cornwall, and was particularly struck with St. Michael's Mount, the bay, etc. : from the impression I then received, I endeavoured to describe them. In walking across the causeway, which leads from Marazion (anciently called Market Jew, on account of the number of Jews there residing for the purpose of traffic,) to the Mount, and which is alone passable at low water, we observed the broken base of what had once supported a very ancient stone cross of Saxon date. This vestige is in so ruinous a state, and so surrounded by the stones forming the causeway, that it was by a fortunate chance alone that I observed it, as we walked slowly over the slippery path. I was struck with it; and my curiosity being excited, I found by a reference to Gilbert's "History of Cornwall," that it must be the base of the identical stone cross, erected in the time of Edward the Confessor, and which at high tide arose with great majesty

above the waters. It must have had a most singular and imposing effect. After standing uninjured, through the tempests of so many centuries, in a storm of more than ordinary violence, it was at length swept away about ninety years ago. I could fancy in the mind's eye the whole scene, the Mount of St. Michael, crowned by its ancient castle and its convent, the sea rising in angry waves between that mount and the mainland, and the cross, the signal of hope, rising unmoved above the stormy and struggling waters. The picture thus presented to my own fancy, suggested to me the scene where the ocean cross of St. Michael's Mount is made the great object of interest, towards the conclusion of Henry de Pomeroy.

THE END.



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